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MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE:

ITS

Blemishes & Defects.

BY

HENRY H. BREEN, ESQ. F.S.A.

"La vérité qui blâme est plus honorable que la vérité qui loue."
J. J. ROUSSEAU.

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PREFACE.

The few introductory remarks, which I have to offer, have reference chiefly to the Chapters on "Composition," "Blunders," and "Mannerism."

Being persuaded that imaginary examples of errors seldom make any impression on the reader, I have, in every instance, cited the name of the author, together with the title of the work from which the quotation is made. When practicable or convenient, I have given several examples, and from different writers. The more the reader is convinced of the prevalence of any error, the more likely he will be to guard against the occurrence of it in his own writings. In no case, however, does this prevalence amount to what Quintilian calls the *consensus eruditorum*. It is admitted that a mode of speech, however faulty when first introduced, ceases to have that

character as soon as it receives the express sanction of the learned. The errors of which I speak are generally the result of ignorance or inadvertency, neither of which can be said to imply concurrence or consent. Moreover, in every instance where I cite an erroneous locution, I can quote far more numerous examples of the correct form.

From the list of authors quoted, I have excluded—1st, our poets of every period and degree; deeming it superfluous to quote errors which might be defended or excused on the score of poetical license, rhythm, and even rhyme; 2ndly, with three or four exceptions, the writers who flourished before the present century. Errors which are wholly inexcusable at the present day, may well be pardoned in an age when the rules of our syntax were comparatively undetermined.

The examples are thus confined to the writers of our own time, and among these to our chief historians and essayists. No one is surprised to hear that ungrammatical forms of speech are to be met with, at every page, in that species of literary production, to which we apply the terms

"light," "current," "fugitive." It was always so, and will continue so to the end of time. It is so in the same department of literature in other countries, and there is no reason why ours should be an exception to the common lot. But that the grossest solecisms and the most palpable blunders should be of frequent occurrence in those who claim to occupy the highest place in the republic of letters, is what few may be prepared to admit.

Much has been written in our day on the "English Language;" on the "Rise, Progress, and Present Structure of the English Language;" on "English Past and Present;" on the "Study of Language;" on the "Study of Words;" on "English Synonymes;" and on "English Grammar." But of what avail are all those writings, if, when we come to put our words together, to combine them for the main purpose for which they are designed, we show ourselves deficient in artistic skill? What would be thought of the painter who could expatiate on the properties of colours, yet should be incapable of making a judicious disposition of them on canvass? What of the architect who could

explain the origin and use of his building materials, yet in practice should exhibit ignorance of the laws of symmetry?

In recommending for imitation the example of the French, so far as relates to grammatical propriety, I do not wish to be understood as recommending that we should sacrifice any of the advantages of our own mother-tongue to the attainment of that object. French is one of the poorest of modern languages; but its poverty does not arise from its method and propriety. This indeed is so little the case, that, if it were written with no greater attention to grammar than English commonly is, it would soon be reduced to an intolerable jargon. English, on the other hand, is one of the richest of living languages; but its copiousness and vigour would suffer no diminution by being combined with a higher degree of method and propriety. That these qualities are not unattainable is sufficiently shown by the examples of such writers as Hazlitt, Southey, and Landor. That they are attainable in an eminent degree, is proved by the fact that the greatest prose writer of the age is indebted for much of his

fame to the correctness and brilliancy of his diction. Correctness, however, like other merits in a writer, has its relative value. In some, it is the chief recommendation; in others, its absence is the principal defect. Correctness is not necessary to constitute a great writer; inaccuracy is sufficient to disparage the greatest.

15*th July*, 1856.

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Page 44, before first line read, "Here are some examples of the correct form."
Page 44, line 18, for "the possessive of *which*," read "a possessive for *of which*."
Page 54, line 2, for "after," read "before."
Page 57, line 9, for "*Books*," read "*Life*."
Page 63, line 12, for "as is connected," read "is connected."
Page 88, lines 13, 15, & 18, for "*Republique*," read "*Republic*."
Page 113, line 14, for "un fil," read "au fil."
Page 115, line 21, for "latter," read "later."
Page 138, line 28, for "parentheses," read "of parentheses."
Page 143, line 13, for "juxtaposition," read "succession."

COMPOSITION.

"Scribendi recte *sapere* est et principium et fons."
HORACE.

"Quam parvâ *sapientiâ* regitur mundus!"
OXENSTIERN.

COMPOSITION.

The most striking characteristic of English literature in the nineteenth century, is the loose and ungrammatical diction that disfigures every species of prose composition. Learning is now more widely diffused, and the number of *writers* is greater than at any former period, but not the number of *correct writers*. We have a hundred Alisons for one Macaulay. Nay, I believe it could be shown that, in proportion as the English language has been improved, the art of composition has been neglected. Let the reader take up any of the publications of the day. A mere glance will satisfy him, that, whatever credit may be due to the author for invention of subject or arrangement of materials, he is sadly deficient in the first requisite of authorship,—the art of communicating his ideas in correct and appropriate language. Everywhere diffuseness and want of method take the place of conciseness and perspicuity; purity of diction and elevation of thought are supplanted by solecisms and common-places;

and what is wanting in dignity and vigour is supplied in vulgarisms and slang. Instead of guiding or reforming the public taste, our authors yield themselves up to the caprice of the passing hour, making the pursuit of literature subservient to the dissemination of every fashionable frivolity, and reducing its professors to the degrading level of this most mercenary of human epochs.

Whatever may be the cause, the fact is undeniable, that modern English prose exhibits more blemishes of style than that of any other language. That this proceeds in a great measure from the character of the language itself, there can be no doubt: for there is no modern language which, from its simplicity of structure and its expressive copiousness, is so well adapted for communicating men's thoughts without labour or effort. But the main cause must be sought for in one of our national peculiarities; and here it must be confessed that, while there is no people more remarkable than we are for a correct appreciation of method and propriety in all mental productions, there is none that displays a greater impatience of restraint in everything that relates to criticism and grammar.

This will be better understood by comparison with the French. Their language is a science in itself, and the labour bestowed on the acquisition of it, has the effect of vividly impressing on the mind both the faults and the beauties of each

style. Method and perspicuity are its very essence; and there is no writer of any note who does not attend to these requisites with commendable scrupulosity. A fault of style becomes apparent to the commonest reader. "Cela saute aux yeux," as they say themselves. With us the case is totally different: our written language is as irregular as that of the French is methodical; and while they are restricted to fixed and clearly defined forms of speech, we can revel in a wealth of phraseology, from which every one deems himself at liberty to select whatever is most pleasing to his taste, without regard to grammar or propriety. Hence the correctness so remarkable in the style of French writers. Hence the looseness so conspicuous in our own. If a French writer of distinction were to violate any important rule of grammar, the fact would be laid hold of immediately by the critics, and laughed at from one end of France to the other. With us an author may discard grammar, precision, and propriety, and few, if any, will raise their voices against such a proceeding. Of course, a total freedom from blemish is not to be looked for in any author, however great his ability; and there are modes of expression even in the best French writers which would not stand the test of severe criticism: but, in general, their authors are as classical as ours are the reverse. Correctness of style is the rule with them; with us it is the exception.

The history of French literature is replete with facts illustrative of these views. All who are familiar with it are aware of the high estimation in which Boileau is held by his countrymen. But, if there be one characteristic more than another for which he is indebted to his great fame, it is perhaps the correctness of his diction. Among the very few sins against grammar that have been detected in his works, there is one which has obtained particular notice, and which consists in the repetition of the preposition *à* in the first line of his Ninth Satire :—

" C'est à vous, mon Esprit, à qui je veux parler."

A foreigner would find it difficult to estimate the effect of this slip upon the grammatical sensibility of French ears. Since its discovery, it has been quoted by every writer on grammar, and impressed on the memory of every schoolboy. Some point to it as one of the few instances of false grammar to be found in the French Horace; but the generality of critics refer to it rather with feelings of surprise, that so correct a writer should have perpetrated so shocking a blunder. Indeed, such is the national fastidiousness on this subject, that I doubt whether there be a single line in Boileau that is so often quoted for its beauty, as this unfortunate one is for its lack of grammar.

In England we treat these matters in a dif-

ferent fashion. Not only are faults of style not offensive to our critical ears, but such is our indifference or insensibility, that we seldom so much as notice them when they fall in our way. "The English," says Hallam, "have ever been as indocile in acknowledging the rules of criticism, even those which determine the most ordinary questions of grammar, as the Italians and French have been voluntarily obedient." I cannot more appropriately illustrate this fact than by quoting from a popular English writer, an example of a fault similar to that of Boileau. In one of Sydney Smith's articles on "Spring Guns," we read the following sentence:—

"It is *to* this last new feature in the supposed Game Laws *to* which, on the present occasion, we intend to confine our notice."

Here we have the preposition *to* improperly repeated; and as Boileau's French, to be correct, should have been: "C'est à vous, mon Esprit, que je veux parler" — or, "C'est vous, mon Esprit, à qui je veux parler;" so our English author should have written: "It is *to* this last new feature in the supposed Game Laws that, on the present occasion, we intend to confine our notice"—or, "It is this last new feature in the supposed Game Laws *to* which, on the present occasion, we intend to confine our notice." Sydney Smith's article is one of the most popular ever written by that deservedly popular writer, and it

is included in his collected essays, which have gone through several editions; but while the slip of the French poet is familiarly known to every educated Frenchman, it may be doubted whether that of the English essayist has attracted the notice of a single critic among his countrymen.

There is nothing that demonstrates the prevalence of ungrammatical diction so much as the occurrence of it in our critics, grammarians, and compilers of dictionaries; as, when we meet with a writer professedly descanting upon rules of grammar, and violating those rules in the very comments he makes upon them. Of all our authors the most reprehensible in this respect is Dr. Hugh Blair. His work on "Rhetoric and Belles Lettres" has gone through near twenty editions, and yet, strange to say, there is no rule of grammar that this learned professor has not sinned against; no fault of style that is not to be found in his remarks. But what is most singular is, that his own fault frequently occurs in the very words he uses in correcting a similar fault in some other writer; as if he designed his *Lectures* as a practical illustration of the errors and inaccuracies which he passes in review.

The faults of composition most worthy of notice in modern prose may be classed under the following heads:—1. Synonymous or redundant terms; 2. The indiscriminate use of singulars and plurals;

3. Want of method and perspicuity; 4. Ungrammatical modes of speech; 5. Slang terms and foreign words.

SYNONYMOUS OR REDUNDANT TERMS.

The occurrence of redundant terms is very common. Authorship has become a trade, and themes and topics are handled, not so much with a view to their real importance, as with that of producing a certain number of volumes, a certain quantity of readable matter. To accomplish this object, adjectives and substantives are thrown in, without method or meaning, while conciseness and perspicuity are left to take care of themselves. It would be a waste of time to quote examples of this blemish from the novels and other fashionable literature of the day, where it is to be met with at every page. In works of higher pretension I have found some instances of it, alike palpable and ludicrous, which will better serve the purpose of illustrations:—

"The *chief* mistakes made by the Irish in pronouncing English lie, for *the most part*, in the sounds of the two first vowels *a* and *e*."—Sheridan. *Dictionary.*

"Why should Dr. Parr *confine* the Eulogomania to the literary character of this Island *alone*."—Sydney Smith. *Essays.*

"His efforts at this juncture were necessarily *confined only* to remonstrance and exhortation."—Roscoe. *Life of Leo X.*

"These justly *entitle* Sappho to the lofty *title* of the tenth muse."—Moir. *Lectures.*

"The *writings* of Buchanan, and especially his Scottish history, are *written* with strength, perspicuity, and neatness."—Hallam. *Literature of Europe.*

"Some writers have confined their attention to *trifling minutiæ* of style."—Whately. *Rhetoric.*

"Such is the *whole* sum-*total* of information which the assiduity of commentators has collected."—Carlyle. *Miscellanies.*

"If in ordinary times *greater* deference be paid to one class of peers *more* than to another, it is to that which is the most adorned by intellect."—Chenevix. *Essay on National Character.*

"The miracle which genius produced, it may repeat, whenever the same happy *combination* of circumstances and persons shall occur *together*."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities of Literature.*

"The complication of the old laws of France had given rise to a *chaos of confusion*."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

"Though not so extensive in point of *superficial surface*, Switzerland embraced an extraordinary variety of climate, soil, and occupation."—*Ibid.*

"Lord Mahon's history of necessity became, in a *great degree*, for *the most part*, a parliamentary one."—Idem. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

"The *whole* physiological theory of Paracelsus consisted, for *the most part*, in the application of the Cabbala to the explaining of the functions of the body."—Soane. *New Curiosities of Literature.*

"It was founded mainly on the *entire* monopoly of the *whole* trade with the colonies."—Alison. *Hist. of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

"Hence has ensued an *entire* change in our *whole* domestic policy."—*Ibid.*

"Those *most entirely* in his confidence were not aware of what he intended."—*Ibid.*

"The Inquisition arrested the *progress* of general intellectual *advancement*." — FOSTER. *Handbook of European Literature.*

Henry Kirke White, in the Preface to his poems, describes them as, "the *juvenile* efforts of a *youth*;" a fault which will appear the more unaccountable, when it is considered that Mr. White was a classical scholar of no mean pretensions. Another sample is the expression, "annual anniversaries," which occurs in the first sentence of a work entitled, "Four Years' Residence in the West Indies," and which has run through three editions in about as many years. It is clear that the author does not understand the meaning of the word "anniversary," and that, including "annual" in its signification, it unequivocally expresses the yearly return of a particular season or point of time without the aid of that word.

Akin to these is the use of "magnanimous" as applied to "mind." Blair has the expression:—

"The magn*animous* affection of the *mind*."

And Macaulay, speaking of the late Lord Holland, describes—

"The magn*animous* credulity of his *mind*."

I could fill a chapter with examples of this inaccuracy. Those I have quoted are sufficient to show the various forms which it assumes with different writers.

SINGULARS AND PLURALS.

The second blemish in English prose is the indiscriminate use of singulars and plurals. Although we have cultivated literature, in its most important departments, with greater success than any other people, yet there is no people so deficient as we are in the knowledge and application of some of the first principles of grammar. And not only does this deficiency exist, as might be supposed, in writers of ordinary ability; but there are very few of our authors, be their genius what it may, who do not exhibit it in a more or less striking degree. The following are examples of the improper use of the singular; and, if necessary, hundreds of a similar character might be added:—

"Both minister and magistrate *is* compelled to choose between his duty and his reputation."—Junius. *Preface to Letters.*

"The boldness, freedom, and variety of our blank verse *is* infinitely more favourable than rhyme to all kinds of sublime poetry."—Blair. *Lectures.*

"In the extravagant admiration for Grecian costume *is* to be discerned the effects of Rousseau's dreams on the social contract."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

"But Ferdinand did not do this, and hence *has* arisen boundless calamities to his country."—Idem. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

"The consequences to the much more numerous classes *remains* to be taken into the account."—Taylor. *Notes from Books.*

"The poetry and eloquence of the Augustan age *was* assiduously studied in Mercian and Northumbrian monasteries."—MACAULAY. *History of England.*

"Few political conspiracies, whenever religion forms a pretext, *is* without a woman."—D'ISRAELI. *Quarrels of Authors.*

"Few, if any town or village in the south of England, *has* a name ending in *by*."—HARRISON. *English Language.*

Some writers maintain, that when two or more nouns singular represent a *single* idea, the verb to which they are the nominative may be put in the singular. This I hold to be a mere quibble; for, if the nouns express the *same* idea, one of them is superfluous, and should be omitted; if *different* ideas, then they form a plural, and the verb should be made to agree with them as such.

Another quibble resorted to by this class of grammarians, is the assertion, that in all such cases the verb may be put in the singular with the last noun, and be *understood* with reference to the others. But they do not tell us how this process of subaudition can go on in the mind of the reader, *before* he knows what the verb is to be. This might apply to phrases in which the verb precedes the nouns: when it comes after them, the sense and the sound alike require that it should agree with them in number.

In support of the opposite view, examples have been cited from Shakspeare and Milton; those who quote them forgetting that Shakspeare and Milton were poets, and not grammarians; and

that, while their authority for the use of similes and sentiments, as well as the appropriateness of the language in which these are embodied, is paramount, it carries no more weight with it, on questions of grammar, than that of other men, their inferiors in genius. To suppose that, because a man is a poet or a historian, he must be correct in his grammar, is as unreasonable as to suppose that an architect must be a joiner, or a physician a compounder of medicines.

In our search after truth, we must never suffer ourselves to be led astray by the occasional lapses of any writer, however high his position. Shakspeare and Milton, our two greatest poets, have examples of this error; and so have Gibbon and Macaulay, our two greatest historians. Indeed, it may be conceded that there is scarcely an English author who does not present some instances of it. But, on the other hand (and this is the point which it behoves us to keep in view), there is no English author whose works do not contain far more numerous instances in which the plural is employed. The use of the plural forms the rule; that of the singular the exception. The former is supported by that "usage" which Horace describes as the

"Jus et norma loquendi."

The latter has nothing to recommend it but the indifference or inadvertency of our writers; a

rule which, if pushed to its legitimate application, would give currency and weight to any piece of vulgarity or slang.

The best proof that this use of the singular is objectionable, is that it is of rarest occurrence in those writers who are reputed the most correct. Hallam and Macaulay have few examples of it; Roscoe and Southey fewer still.

There is another form of phrase in which the singular is often employed, although it would be more consistent with grammar to use the plural. Here is an example :—

"Valentia is one of the most delightful cities which *is* to be found in Europe."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

To be convinced of the propriety of employing the plural here, we have only to reflect that "which" is the nominative to "is;" and that the direct antecedent of "which" is the plural "cities." Another way of testing the accuracy of all such phrases is to invert the order of the words thus :—

"Of the most delightful cities which *is* to be found in Europe, Valentia is one."

The following are further examples :—

"Mr. Dodsley this year brought out his 'Preceptor,' one of the most valuable *books* for the improvement of young minds that *has* appeared in any language."—Boswell. *Life of Johnson.*

"Sully bought of Monsieur de la Roche Guyon one of the finest Spanish *horses* that ever *was* seen."—Southey. *The Doctor.*

"It was one of the most important *alliances* that ever *was* formed."—Roscoe. *Life of Leo X.*

"Alexander, emperor of Russia, is one of the *sovereigns* of modern times who *has* left the greatest name in history."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

I will go further, and assert of all such phrases, that they contain a contradiction in terms. Take, for example, our last quotation. The writer means to say that the circumstance of leaving the greatest name in history is *common* to Alexander and *other* sovereigns; and yet he affirms that circumstance of Alexander *alone*. The truth is, the writer is betrayed into this inaccuracy, because the phrase sounds as if he had said:—

"Alexander, emperor of Russia, is *the* sovereign of modern times who *has* left the greatest name in history."

The following sentence contains an error somewhat analogous to the foregoing:—

"Suchet's administration was incomparably the *least* oppressive *of that* of any of the French generals in the Peninsula."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

It would have been correct to say:—

"Suchet's administration was incomparably *less* oppressive *than that* of any of the French generals in the Peninsula."

And that is probably what the writer was thinking of. But (as I shall have occasion to show in the course of this work) the "thinking" and the "writing" of an author are seldom in

accordance with each other. It never occurs to those who use this expression that the superlative degree cannot be formed with only one thing as a means of comparison.

In the foregoing examples, we have the singular improperly put for the plural. The use of the plural instead of the singular is no less common. The following are instances :—

"The terms in which the *sale* of a patent to Mr. Hine *were* communicated to the public."—JUNIUS. *Letters.*

"If Machiavel had not known that an *appearance* of morals and religion *are* useful in society."—*Ibid.*

"To heighten the calamity which the *want* of these useful labours *make* every literary man feel."—D'ISRAELI. *Calamities of Authors.*

"It is in such moments of gloom and depression that the immortal *superiority* of genius and virtue most strongly *appear.*" —ALISON. *Essay on Châteaubriand.*

"It is refreshing to see those just and manly sentiments, after the sickly *partiality* for Roman Catholic agitators, *which*, for the purposes of faction, *have* so long pervaded many of his party."—ALISON. *Essay on Macaulay.*

"It has already been stated that the *difference* between the new and the old German, the Dutch and the Frisian, the Italian and the Latin, the Romaic and the Greek, *are* precisely similar."—LATHAM. *The English Language.*

"The *authority* of Addison, in matters of grammar; of Bentley, who never made the English grammar his study; of Bolingbroke, Pope, and others, *are* as nothing."—HARRISON. On the *English Language.*

In order to show the prevalence of this error, I shall quote some examples of it from Gibbon, who is justly reckoned one of our most correct

writers. The citations are all taken from the fifth volume of his great work, as edited by Dean Milman:—

"The *use* of fraud and perfidy, of cruelty and injustice, *were* often subservient to the propagation of the faith."—*Decline and Fall.*

"The *richness* of her arms and apparel *were* conspicuous in the foremost ranks."—*Ibid.*

"The *jurisdiction* of the presidents, the consulars, and the counts, *were* superseded by the institution of the *themes* or military governments."—*Ibid.*

"The *pronunciation* of the two vowels *have* been nearly the same."—*Ibid.*

Such are ordinary instances of the occurrence of this fault; but there are other forms of it which are quite as incorrect, though not quite so palpable. These arise in connexion with the words *or*, *neither*, *no one*, *each*, *every one*, *everything*, *as well as*, *much*, *more*, *less*, *many a*, *with*, *little*, *nothing*.

Or.

As the proper office of "and" is to conjoin, so that of "or" is to disjoin. And yet, how commonly do we meet with "or" performing the function of conjoining nouns singular! Examples:—

"Those whose profession *or* whose reputation *regulate* public opinion."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities.*

"When the helplessness of childhood, *or* the frailty of woman, *make* an appeal to her generosity."—Jeffrey. *Essays.*

"Satire, a poem in which wickedness *or* folly *are* censured."—Walker. *Sub voce* "Satire."

"Often Caulincourt *or* Duroc *were* up with him hard at work all night."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

"Either a pestilence *or* a famine, a victory *or* a defeat, an oracle of the gods *or* the eloquence of a daring leader, *were* sufficient to impel the Gothic arms."—GIBBON. *Decline and Fall.*

Surely, the writer's meaning is that any *one* of those causes *was* sufficient to impel the Gothic arms; and not (as his use of the plural would imply) that *all* those causes were sufficient to produce that effect. The same remarks apply to

Neither.

"*Neither* Charles nor his brother *were* qualified to support such a system."—JUNIUS. *Letters.*

"How happy it is that *neither* of us *were* ill in the Hebrides!"—JOHNSON. *Letter to Boswell, 17th Feb.* 1774.

"In the names of objects which address the sight only, where *neither* noise nor motion *are* concerned."—BLAIR. *Lectures.*

"*Neither bear* any sign of case at all."—LATHAM. *The English Language.*

No one.

"*No one* can have lost *their* character by this sort of exercise."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities.*

Each.

"How far *each* of the three great Epic poets *have* distinguished themselves in this part."—BLAIR. *Lectures.*

"*Each* of these chimerical personages *come* from different provinces in the gesticulating land of pantomime."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities.*

"No one can consider their works without perceiving the analogy of the place *each hold* in their respective arts."—HALLAM. *Literature of Europe.*

"It embraces five great periods, *each* of which *have* stamped their own peculiar impress on the character of the people."—ALISON. *Essay on Karamsin's Russia.*

"I have known few comrades whose loss I more deeply mourned than those of Lemon, Kempe, Brandreth, and Rosser, *each* of whom was warm in personal attachment, and valuable *contributors* to the *Literary Gazette.*"—JERDAN. *Autobiography.*

Every one.

"*Every one* of this grotesque family *were* the creatures of national genius."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities.*

"*Every one* of these polysyllables still *keep* their ground."—*Ibid.*

Everything.

"*Everything* that painting, music, and even place furnish, *were* called in to interest the audience."—ALISON. *Essay on the British Theatre.*

As well as.

"The honour, *as well as* the genius of De Foe, *were* questioned."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities of Literature.*

"I cannot so thoroughly admire the ode addressed to sleep, which Bouterwek *as well as* Sedano *extol.*" — HALLAM. *Literature of Europe.*

"Foresight in preparation, *as well as* energy in action, *were* necessary to sustain their fortunes."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

I was surprised to meet with this inaccuracy in so correct a writer as Gibbon. And even Gibbon seems to have no fixed rule on the subject; for he sometimes employs the plural, and

sometimes the singular. Here are some examples of the former :—

"The temper, *as well as* knowledge, of a modern historian, *require* a more sober and accurate language."—*Decline and Fall.*

"Homer, *as well as* Virgil, *were* transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube."—*Ibid.*

In the following sentences, of a precisely similar structure, the verb is put in the singular :—

"The strength, *as well as* the attention, of the defenders, *is* divided."—*Ibid.*

"America, *as well as* Europe, *has* received letters from the one and religion from the other."—*Ibid.*

"Africa, *as well as* Gaul, *was* gradually fashioned to the imitation of the capital."—*Ibid.*

Much.

"From every eye and soul *have* disappeared *much* of the beauty and glory both of nature and life."—Wilson. *Recreations of C. North.*

"Madame de Staël observes that *much* of the guilt and the misery which are vulgarly imputed to great talents, really *arise* from not having talent enough."—Jeffrey. *Essays.*

More.

"*More* than a century and a half *have* elapsed since the first publication of 'Gondibert.' "—D'Israeli. *Quarrels of Authors.*

Less.

"At present the trade is thought to be in a depressed state, if *less* than a million of tons *are* produced in a year."—Macaulay. *History of England.*

Many a.

"There *sleep many a* Homer and Virgil, legitimate heirs of their genius."—D'Israeli. *The Literary Character.*

With.

"Olympus, *with* its multitude of stately, celestial natures, *dwindle* before the solitary, immutable throne of Jehovah."—GILFILLAN. *Literary Portraits.*

"The duchy of Pomerania, *with* the island of Rugen, *were* ceded by Sweden to the Danish crown."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

In this sentence the writer makes "duchy" and "island" the nominative to "were." But sound grammar requires the verb in the singular: 1st. Because the preposition "with" has for its objective case the word "island," which cannot be at the same time both in the nominative and the objective cases. And 2ndly. Because the sentence, if transposed, will resolve itself into the following ungrammatical form:—

"The duchy of Pomerania *were* ceded by Sweden to the Danish crown, with the island of Rugen."

And here let me remark on the strange inconsistency of certain writers. At one time, disregarding the proper office of the conjunction "and," they disjoin what it couples, and put the verb in the singular. At another time, overlooking the proper function of the preposition "with," they couple the noun which it governs with a nominative, and put the verb in the plural.

As to the form of phrase in question, the weight of authority is with those who employ the verb in

the singular. Gibbon does so in every instance; while Macaulay and other eminent writers invariably use the conjunction "and," instead of the preposition "with," especially where the sense requires the plural, as in this example :—

"This Thyre, surnamed Bolöxe, *with* her twelve children, *were* notorious robbers."—THORPE. *Northern Mythology.*

In this place *were* is absurd, because, grammatically speaking, its nominative is the singular "Thyre;" and *was* would be equally so, because it would not include "children." The fact is, all this absurdity arises from the great parent absurdity of employing the preposition "with," instead of the conjunction "and." Schoòl-boys, before they are transformed into authors, generally write such sentences in the following unsophisticated fashion :—

"This Thyre, surnamed Bolöxe, *and* her twelve children *were* notorious robbers."

Little.

"Concerning some of them *little* more than the names *are* to be learned from literary history."—HALLAM. *Literature of Europe.*

"It is from no want of poetical disposition that there *have* been, since the rise of free institutions, so *little* real poetry in France."—ALISON. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

Nothing.

"It would be worse than useless to enter into minute disquisitions on a subject where *nothing* but clearness and simplicity *are* desirable."—MAUNDER. *English Scholar's Guide.*

There are some who carry this confusion of singulars and plurals so far as to apply both to the same word. Examples :—

"The Catholic party *is* by no means inferior in the felicities of *their* style."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities.*

"In every ward one of the king's council took every man's *book*, and sealed *them*, and brought them to Guildhall to confront them with the *original*.—*Ibid.*

"The Roman Saturnalia *were* latterly prolonged to a week's debauchery and folly."—*Ibid.*

"Such *was* the Roman Saturnalia, the favourite popular recreations of Paganism."—*Ibid.*

Alison has some examples of the same fault :—

"The study of a *single character* must, with her, be the work of nearly as much time and thought as *their* original conception by the dramatic poet."—*Essay on the British Theatre.*

"The Spanish government, exhausted by the exertions *they* had already made, *was* unable to maintain *their* forces at the former complement."—*History of Europe.*

"Seated in *their* high saddles, with stirrups so short that *their* knees are up to *their* elbows, and the reins of a powerful bit in *their* hands, the Turkish *horseman* pushes on with fearless hardihood at the gallop, confident in *his* sure-footed steed."—*History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

Under this head may be classed the following instance, in which the same nominative is put in the plural with one verb, and in the singular with another :—

"The masterly boldness and precision of his outline, which *astonish* those who have trodden parts of the same field, *is* apt to escape an uninformed reader."—Hallam. *Literature of Europe.*

There is another form of phrase in which it should seem that neither the singular nor the plural can be properly employed. This occurs when two adjectives of different import are coupled with a noun singular. Here are some examples:—

"We suppose in England that the abstract and the practical knowledge *are* at variance."—Sir B. Lytton. *England and the English.*

"In the latter also religious and grammatical learning *go* hand in hand."—Hallam. *Literature of Europe.*

"The blessings which political and intellectual freedom *have* brought in their train."—Macaulay. *History of England.*

"An English and a Frenchwoman *are* in fact destined to different functions in the system of society."—Chenevix. *Essay on National Character.*

"The king was an adept in necromancy, and a male and female devil *were* always in waiting for any emergency."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities.*

In these sentences the grammar seems to require the verb in the singular. It sounds harsh to say "knowledge are," "learning go," "freedom have," "woman are," "a devil were." But the sense requires the plural, as this example will show:—

"The logical and historical *analysis* of a language generally in some degree *coincides*."—Latham. *The English Language.*

Here the grammar is correct: "analysis" is in the singular, and so is "coincides." But the sense is sacrificed, inasmuch as the singular cannot properly express a "coincidence," which

always implies two things, at least. In all such sentences, the difficulty is got rid of by repeating the noun which forms the nominative to the verb, as in the following:—

"Roman Catholic *Europe* and Reformed *Europe* were struggling for death or life." — MACAULAY. *History of England.*

This sort of plural assumes another shape in such sentences as the following:—

"An *officer* on European and on Indian service *are* in very different situations."—SYDNEY SMITH. *Essays.*

"The *praise* of the statesman, the warrior, or the orator *furnish* more splendid topics for ambitious eloquence."—VERPLANCK. *The Schoolmaster.*

"The *literature* of France, Germany, and England *are* at least as necessary for a man born in the nineteenth century as *that* of Rome and Athens."—SIR B. LYTTON. *England and the English.*

In this last example the writer is opposed to himself: for, if he is correct in using the singular "that" with reference to the literature of Rome and Athens, then the plural "are" is incorrectly coupled with the same word in the beginning of the sentence.

To these I shall add an instance of a peculiar kind, which occurs in a speech made by Mr. Cobden at Manchester, in 1851. It is as follows:—

"We have already made such progress, that some four or five millions of reduction in our expenditure *has* taken place."

Here it is intended that "reduction" should be the nominative case to "has;" and so, in

truth, the sense requires it. But the phrase is so constructed that "reduction" is governed by the preposition "of," while the real nominative to "has" is "millions." "Has" is therefore bad; and "have" would be equally bad, because it is not the "millions" that have taken place, but the "reduction." The sentence should stand thus:—

"We have already made such progress, that a reduction of some four or five millions in our expenditure has taken place."

Here is another example of the same fault:—

"A few *hours* of mutual intercourse *dispels* the alienation which years of separation may have produced."—Alison. *Essay on the Royal Progress.*

So much for the confounding of singulars and plurals. It is not for me to explain how it comes to pass that a blunder, so offensive to the ear, should be so common even in our most distinguished writers. There is, however, one circumstance which obviously tends to its production, and which, as confirming the views already propounded respecting our indifference on the score of grammar, it is incumbent on me to lay before the reader. The mind of an educated Frenchman is so thoroughly alive to the grammatical difficulties of his native tongue, that, however involved a sentence may be, he always keeps in view the relative position of each of its members. Before he writes a verb, he ascertains the number of its

nominative case, and takes care to make them agree, although several nouns of a different number should intervene. Not so the Englishman. With us, generally speaking, the nominative is lost sight of, and the verb made to agree with any noun which, from its position or other circumstance, may happen to linger on our ear.

METHOD AND PERSPICUITY.

The third blemish in English prose is occasioned by the little attention that is paid to perspicuity; in other words, to the relation in which the different members of a sentence should stand towards each other. At almost every page the reader meets with some sentence, the form of which suggests a different meaning from that which the writer intended and the sense requires. Not unfrequently, in order to avoid being imposed upon with sheer nonsense, one is compelled to adopt a meaning in direct opposition to the writer's words, and to trust to one's own penetration and good sense for the correction of the author's language and the rectification of his blunders.

A striking instance of a want of perspicuity is the following sentence in Dr. Blair:—

"Claudian, in a fragment upon the wars of the giants, has contrived to render this idea of their throwing the mountains,

which is in itself so grand, burlesque and ridiculous."—*Lectures on Rhetoric.*

Can anything be more burlesque and ridiculous than the jumbling of the grand, the burlesque, and the ridiculous, which this curious sentence presents? What the writer meant was this:—

"Claudian, in a fragment upon the wars of the giants, has contrived to render burlesque and ridiculous, this idea of their throwing the mountains, which is in itself so grand."

Another example occurs in Blair's definition of "precision:"—

"Precision imports pruning the expression, so as to exhibit neither *more nor less* than an *exact* copy of *his* idea *who* uses it."—*Lectures.*

Here we have, in two lines, not only the most glaring instance of a want of perspicuity, but also a want of precision, a want of grammar, and a want of truth. The want of perspicuity is apparent both in the words and in the arrangement of them. The want of precision, the very thing which the writer is endeavouring to define, is shown in the terms "neither more nor less," and "exact." Both express the same quality, and the sentence, to be "precise," should have been pruned of one or the other. The want of grammar is manifest in the expression, "*his* idea *who* uses it." And lastly, the definition is false on the very face of it. An expression may be an exact copy of a man's idea, and yet be deficient in precision. This will

happen, as Blair himself remarks further on, "when the ideas are not very clear in a man's mind;" when "being loose and general, they cannot be expressed with precision."

It is somewhat surprising to find a grammarian of the ability of Lindley Murray adopting Blair's definition of "precision," without the slightest attempt to retrench its superfluities or supply its lack of grammar. His words are:—

"Precision signifies retrenching superfluities, and pruning the expression, so as to exhibit neither more nor less than an exact copy of the person's idea who uses it."—*English Grammar.*

The only alteration he makes is to substitute one possessive for another. Blair has "his idea who," and Murray "the person's idea who;" so that, according to these learned teachers of rhetoric and grammar, we must find the antecedent of "who" in the word "idea," or accept as correct the expressions "his who," "the person's who."

Here are some further examples of a want of perspicuity:—

"The salt-merchants, the grocers, the confectioners conspired together to adulterate the articles in which they dealt in a thousand ways."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

This should be: "To adulterate, in a thousand ways, the articles in which they dealt."

"Hence the despotic state will be generally successful, if a contest occurs, in the outset."—*Ibid.*

This should be :—

"Hence, if a contest occurs, the despotic state will be generally successful in the outset."

"Two municipal officers intimated that the people were crowding round the gates of the prisons, and praying for instructions, but they did nothing."

Who would infer from such a phrase that it was the municipal officers, and not the people, that prayed for instructions?

"Shut out by the sterility of the soil and the variable nature of the climate, where storms of rain and snow, attracted by the cold summits of the Atlas, are frequent, from the labours of agriculture, they dwell in the mountains with their flocks and herds only in the winter and spring."—ALISON. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

Here the writer would lead us to believe that the "frequent storms of rain and snow" are caused by "the labours of agriculture." And yet, to prevent so preposterous a conclusion, all he had to do was to place the words, "from the labours of agriculture," immediately after the words "shut out." There is no want of clearness in the ideas; and nothing but a rare perversity of taste, or a studied design to write nonsense, can account for the form which is given to them on paper.

The following samples are from Isaac D'Israeli:

"I have heard this great student censured for neglecting his official duties; but it would be necessary to decide on this accusation to know the character of his accusers."—*Curiosities.*

In this phrase the writer expresses the contrary of what he means. He should have written it:—

"I have heard this great student censured for neglecting his official duties; but in order to decide on this accusation, it would be necessary to know the character of his accusers."

"I have written the history of the Mar-Prelate Faction in *Quarrels of Authors*, which our historians appear not to have known."—*Ibid.*

This sentence is so constructed as to leave the reader to infer that what was not known to the historians was the Quarrels of Authors, and not the history of the Mar-Prelate Faction. The correct form is:—

"I have written, in *Quarrels of Authors*, the history of the Mar-Prelate Faction, which our historians appear not to have known."

"The beaux of that day used the abominable art of painting their faces, as well as the women."—*Ibid.*

This should be:—

"The beaux of that day, as well as the women, used the abominable art of painting their faces."

"That great original, the author of *Hudibras*, has been censured for exposing to ridicule the Sir Samuel Luke, under whose roof he dwelt, in the grotesque character of his hero."—*Ibid.*

The confusion here might have been obviated by placing the last member of the sentence immediately after the word "ridicule." As it stands, we are made to believe that Butler personated the

grotesque character of his hero, while he dwelt under the roof of Sir Samuel Luke!

Here are some instances from Hallam's "Literature of Europe." The punctuation is that of the second edition:—

"Wolsey left at his death many buildings which he had begun in an unfinished state, and which no one expects to see complete."

The historian meant to say:—

"Wolsey left at his death, in an unfinished state, many buildings which he had begun, and which no one expects to see complete."

"I have now and then inserted in the text characters of books that I have not read on the faith of my guides."

To make sense of this we must read:—

"I have now and then inserted in the text, on the faith of my guides, characters of books that I have not read."

"Leo Baptista Alberti was a man who may claim a place in the temple of glory he has not filled."

This should be:—

"Leo Baptista Alberti was a man who may claim, in the temple of glory, a place he has not filled."

"There is a copy in the British Museum; and M. Raynouard has given a short account of one that he had seen in the 'Journal des Savans' for 1826."

The meaning of this will be made clear by

restoring the members of the sentence to their natural order :—

"There is a copy in the British Museum; and M. Raynouard, in the 'Journal des Savans' for 1826, has given a short account of one that he had seen."

There is nothing, whether it be the meaning of a phrase, or the expression of a face, that affectation will not mar. To its debasing influence may be ascribed much of the obscurity that pervades our prose writings. Even the judgment of such a writer as Sydney Smith does not always protect him from the infection. In one of his critical *Essays* we have this sentence :—

"Mr. Broadhurst is a *very* good sort of man, who has not written a *very* bad book, upon a *very* important subject."

Here we see that the attempt at quaintness, in the repetition of the word "very," gives a nonsensical air to the sentence. At first, the reader might infer that the subject, on which Mr. Broadhurst had written, was *not* a very important one; but when he reflects that that subject is nothing less than "Female Education," he is compelled to search for the reviewer's meaning rather in what he intended to say than in what he says.

Certain phrases are elliptical in their construction, and when this is confined within allowable limits, it adds a degree of vigour to the style. Sometimes, however, the ellipsis is carried beyond

those limits, and renders the sentence unintelligible. Examples :—

"South, as great a wit as a preacher, has separated the superior and the domestic."—D'ISRAELI. *Miscellanies.*

The writer intended to say that South was as great a wit, as *he was* a preacher; but, owing to the words "he was" being omitted, the sentence means that "South had all the wit of a preacher."

"The following facts may, or have been, adduced as reasons on the other side."—LATHAM. *The English Language.*

Here the word "be" has been incorrectly omitted after "may;" for if we leave out the words "or have been," which are merely incidental, the remainder will read thus :—

"The following facts *may adduced* as reasons on the other side."

"General Stewart with difficulty made good his retreat, fighting all the way, to Alexandria, where he arrived with a thousand fewer men than he had set out."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

In this sentence, owing to the improper omission of the word "with" at the end, we are left to believe that General Stewart performed the operation (whatever that may be) of *setting out his men.*

"The experienced commander will *not* deem such aids to patriotic ardour of little importance, and *willingly fan* the harmless vanity of the young aspirant."—*Ibid.*

In this phrase the word "will" should have been repeated before "willingly." This would have been unnecessary, if the writer had not

used the negative in the preceding part of the sentence.

"When the emperor Alexander elevated the standard of the cross, he invoked the only power that ever *has*, or ever will, *arrest* the march of temporal revolution."—*Ibid.*

"It is not worthy of the powers of its author, who *can*, and *has*, at other times, *risen* into much loftier ground."—GILFILLAN. *Literary Portraits.*

If this form of phrase were adopted, it would be correct to say "has arrest"—"can risen."

"This union shared the fate of nearly all in every rank which are formed by parental authority, before the disposition *has* declared itself, the constitution *strengthened*, or the tastes *formed*."—ALISON. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

Here there is not the word "been" after "has;" neither can that word be understood, without making nonsense of the phrase. Its subaudition, therefore, before the participles "strengthened" and "formed," is inaccurate.

"If it has been shown that the foundations of our systems of logic are falsely laid, *an essential service has been rendered* to the future logician, and *smoothed his way* to what Locke calls 'a very different sort of logic and critic' from any with which he has hitherto been made acquainted."—RICHARDSON. *The Study of Language.*

This sentence goes the length of coupling the nominative and objective cases. To make sense of it, it would be necessary to convert the words, "an essential service has been rendered," into "I have rendered an essential service;" or, "and smoothed his way" should be—"and his way has been smoothed."

UNGRAMMATICAL MODES OF SPEECH.

The next blemish that I have to notice arises from the use of ungrammatical modes of speech. The most glaring of these may be stated under the following heads:—

Nominative without a Verb.

There is no writer so addicted to this blunder as Isaac D'Israeli. Here are some instances from his principal work.

"The *Germans* of the present day, although greatly superior to their ancestors, there are who opine that they are still distant from that acme of taste which characterizes the finished compositions of the French and the English authors."—*Curiosities of Literature.*

"In all their rejoicings the ancients used fires; but they were intended merely to burn their sacrifices, and *which*, as the generality of them were performed at night, the illuminations served to give light to the ceremonies."—*Ibid.*

"The wealth of the great Audley may be considered as the cloudy medium through which a bright genius shone, and *which*, had it been thrown into a nobler sphere of action, the greatness would have been less ambiguous."—*Ibid.*

"How fortunate then was James Naylor, *who*, desirous of entering Bristol on an ass, Hume informs us that all Bristol could not afford him one."—*Ibid.*

In the first of these examples the writer should have commenced with the word "concerning." In the second and third the "which" should

have been omitted as redundant. In the fourth the word "was" should have followed "who," and the word "but" preceded "Hume:" or the sentence might have been formed thus:—

"How fortunate then was James Naylor, who, desirous of entering Bristol on an ass, was unable, Hume informs us, to procure one in the whole town."

And yet this is the writer who, while penning these blunders, talks with such insufferable flippancy of the "acme of taste," and of "finished compositions."

"When on the eve of departure he desired his wife, who was at the time pregnant, *that* if she brought him a son, to place a tower on the church."—THORPE. *Northern Mythology.*

In this example the word *that* is superfluous, the sentence being complete without it.

Under this head may be classed the following samples from Sir A. Alison:—

"The conduct of the king and cabinet evinced that vacillation *which*, as it is the invariable mark of weakness in presence of danger, so it is the usual precursor of the greatest public calamities."—*History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon.*

"It is *owing* to his advice that the general plan of the campaign, afterwards so admirably carried into execution by Barclay, is to be ascribed."—*History of Europe.*

In the latter example the word "owing" is redundant. To make sense of it, the sentence should conclude with "was adopted," instead of "is to be ascribed."

"*It* has been already mentioned how Sir Home Popham proceeded from the Cape of Good Hope to Buenos Ayres, and the disastrous issue of that expedition."—*Ibid.*

It is by no means clear whether the writer intended the word "issue," in this phrase, as a nominative or an objective. As the sentence stands, the beginning and the end of it are grammatically irreconcilable. If the first part be retained, it should conclude thus:—

"It has been already mentioned how Sir Home Popham proceeded from the Cape of Good Hope to Buenos Ayres, and how that expedition had a disastrous issue."

If the latter part be retained, the phrase should commence as follows:—

"*I* have already mentioned how Sir Home Popham proceeded from the Cape of Good Hope to Buenos Ayres, and the disastrous issue of that expedition."

Verb without a Nominative.

I have met with an instance of this fault in Taylor's "Notes from Books:"—

"Wherein then is to consist the freedom of his heart? We answer, in self-government upon a large scale—in *so* dealing with his years and months as *shall impart* a certain orderly liberty to his days and hours."

In this phrase the preposition "to" should have been put in the place of "shall," or "such a manner" been employed for "so."

How can "so" be the nominative to "shall impart"?

Preposition repeated.

"Alphonsus ordered a great fire to be prepared, *into* which, after his majesty and the public had joined in prayer for heavenly assistance in this ordeal, both the rivals were thrown *into* the flames."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities.*

Here the writer should have stopped at the word "thrown."

"*To* the 365 days in the year he has prefixed *to* each an epistle dedicatory."—*Ibid.*

This should have been:—

"To each of the 365 days in the year he has prefixed an epistle dedicatory."

"It is *to* this last new feature in the supposed Game Laws *to* which we intend to confine our notice."—Sydney Smith. *Essays.*

"From sheer necessity Congress was driven to lay *on* a great variety of new taxes *on* exciseable articles."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

"The eating *in* of usury *into* the vitals of the state."—*Ibid.*

These samples speak for themselves.

Improper use of the Pronouns.

"I strike the harp in praise of Bragela, *she* that I left in the isle of mist."—Macpherson. *Ossian.*

"Let me awake the king of Morven, *he* that smiles in danger; *he* that is like the sun of Heaven rising in a storm."—*Ibid.*

In these phrases the pronouns should be in the

same case—the objective—as the nouns to which they refer.

Here are other instances requiring the objective case :—

"Let me see *who* do I know among them."—SOUTHEY. *The Doctor.*

"Between Alaric Watts and *I* no such event ever occurred to be lamented now."—JERDAN. *Autobiography.*

"The cherished plan of publication between Sir J. Leicester and *I* was thus announced."—*Ibid.*

In the following the pronouns should be in the nominative case :—

"What should we gain by it but that we should speedily become as poor as *them*."—ALISON. *Essay on Macaulay.*

"The very scullion who cleans the brasses in the kitchen becomes of more consideration and importance than *him*."—FRANKLIN. *Essays.*

"Robert is there, the very out-come of him, and indeed of many generations of such as *him*."—CARLYLE. *Heroes and Hero Worship.*

"Sir Thomas More in general so writes it, although not many others so late as *him*."—TRENCH. *English Past and Present.*

Some writers affect to think that in such phrases "than" and "as" may be regarded as prepositions, and the pronouns as being correctly put in the objective case. This view of the matter, however, is confined to two or three writers; and so long as it is, we are bound to hold it as erroneous.

It is a curious circumstance that one of the few errors of style in Cobbett's English Gram-

mar, arises from the misuse of what he calls "the poor, oppressed little pronoun *it*," against which misuse he is always cautioning his "dear James." This affords a fresh illustration of the fact, that it is easier to preach than to practise; a disadvantage to which we are all more or less subject. Cobbett, in Letter xvii., inculcates the cautious use of "it" in these words:—

"Never put an '*it*' upon paper, without thinking well what you are about. When I see many *its* in a page, I always tremble for the writer."

And in Letter xxi. he employs this same *it* as the nominative to a verb, which has its nominative already in the word "logic."

"The *logic*, though the religious zeal of its pious, sincere, and benevolent author has led him into the very great error of taking his examples of self-evident propositions from amongst those, many of which great numbers of men think not to be self-evident, *it* is a work wherein profound learning is conveyed in a style the most simple, and in a manner the most pleasing."

Dr. Blair, in a couple of places, employs the words "they are" instead "it is," thus:—

"*They are* the ardent sentiments of honour, virtue, magnanimity, and public spirit, that only can kindle the fire of genius."—*Lectures.*

"*They are* the wretched attempts towards an art of this kind, which have so often disgraced oratory."—*Ibid.*

This use of "they are," instead of "it is," so contrary to grammar and usage, sounds very strange. It looks as if Blair had been aiming

at an innovation, founded on the French expression, "ce sont." But even in this the French do not use the word "ils," which corresponds to our "they." "They," like "ils," would have reference to something in the preceding sentence; and it is this want of reference that makes it read so nonsensical in the passages cited from Blair.

In general Sir A. Alison's sentences, though ill-constructed, afford a sufficient glimpse of his meaning; but when he begins to moralize and draw parallels, the obscurity of his style becomes altogether impenetrable. For instance, at the end of Chapter lxiii. of his "History of Europe," he has a parallel about the Duke of Wellington, in which there is a strange confusion of the pronouns:—

"He thus succeeded in at last combating the revolution with *its* own weapons, and at the same time detaching from *them* the moral weakness under which *it* laboured. He met *it* with *its* own forces; but he rested *their* efforts on a nobler principle."

Of a similar character is the following:—

"No *people* ever *was* more rudely assailed by the sword of conquest than *those* of this country; none had *its* chains, to appearance, more firmly riveted round *their* necks."—*Ibid.*

Another fault which may be noticed in this place is when a relative pronoun is coupled with the possessive case. Examples:—

"Observe the tortures of a mind, even of so great a mind as *that* of Warburton's."—D'Israeli. *Quarrels of Authors.*

Example corrected:—

"Nor was the style of his speaking at all like *that* of other men's."—BROUGHAM. *Essay on Windham.*

"Those who have explored with strictest scrutiny the secret of their own bosoms, will be least apt to rush with intolerant violence into *that* of other men's."—CARLYLE. *Miscellanies.*

In the following D'Israeli gives us a relative pronoun without an antecedent:—

"It is to prevent all this disorder, and to enjoy all the usefulness and the pleasure of this various knowledge, *which* has produced the invention of *notes* in literary history."—*Preface to Quarrels of Authors.*

This sentence should be:—

"It is to prevent all this disorder, and to enjoy all the usefulness and the pleasure of this various knowledge, that *notes* were invented in literary history."

Whose.

The use of *whose*, as the possessive of *which*, though at first nothing more than a poetic license, is now to be met with in our correctest prose writers. The one who has given the most decided sanction to this innovation is Gibbon, in whose great work it is of frequent occurrence. Here is an example:—

"In the centre arose a column of marble, *whose* height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away."—*Decline and Fall.*

There can be no doubt that this use of "whose" gives terseness and vigour to the language; and it may be said that the *consensus eruditorum* has

now taken it out of the category of faulty locutions. We must be careful, however, lest our familiar use of it betray us into applying *who* and *whom* to things inanimate or irrational, as Gibbon has done in the following sentence:—

"The reindeer, that useful animal, from *whom* the savage of the north derives the best comforts of his dreary life."—*Ibid.*

Connected with this employment of "whose" is the use of the possessive "his," as the antecedent to the relative "who," "whose." Examples:—

"Precision imports pruning the expression so as to exhibit neither more nor less than an exact copy of *his* idea *who* uses it."—Blair. *Lectures.*

"The more accurately we search into the human mind, the stronger traces we everywhere find of *his* wisdom *who* made it."—Burke. *Inquiry into Origin of the Sublime.*

"Dr. Wittman might have brought us back not anile conjecture, but sound evidence of events which must determine *his* character *who* must determine our fate."—Sydney Smith. *Essays.*

"The sight of *his* blood *whom* they deemed invulnerable, shook the courage of the soldiers."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

Whatever may be said on the score of poetry, the rules of plain prose require the expression "of him," instead of "his."

Than.

Another source of inaccuracy is the use of the word *than*, which is constantly usurping the place of other words, while its own proper station is occupied by all sorts of substitutes. Here are

some instances in which other expressions are incorrectly used instead of "than:"—

"To a mind like yours there is no *other* road to fame, *but* by the destruction of a noble fabric."—JUNIUS. *Letters.*

"For this difference no *other* general cause can be assigned *but* culture and education."—BLAIR. *Lectures.*

"They have no *other* standard on which to form themselves, *except* what chances to be fashionable."—*Ibid.*

In these examples the omission of "other" would leave the sense unaltered, and then the "but" would be correct. In fact, the inaccuracy of "no *other but*" has crept in, because it sounds like "none but."

In the following, "than" is improperly put for other words:—

"The old nature returned with *double* force *than* formerly, and was in him to his dying day."—GILFILLAN. *Literary Portraits.*

"A history now by a Mr. Hume, or a poem by a Mr. Pope, would be examined with *different* eyes *than* had they borne any other name."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities.*

"To reconstruct such a work in another language were business for a man of *different* powers *than* has yet attempted German translation among us."—CARLYLE. *Miscellanies.*

Strange confusion this! When "other" occurs, we see it followed by "but" or "except," instead of "than;" and where "than" is employed, we find it preceded by "different," instead of "other." But what is worse, the same writer who makes it "different than," in one place, has it "different to," in another.

"Indeed, were we to judge of German reading habits from these volumes of ours, we should draw quite a *different* conclusion *to* Paul's."—CARLYLE. *Miscellanies.*

And D'Israeli, who, in the sentence above quoted, has it "different than," in another place makes it "different with."

"The conversations of men of letters are of a *different* complexion *with* the talk of men of the world."—*The Literary Character.*

Here is another example of the improper use of "than:"—

"The majority of them established another doctrine *as* false in itself, and, if possible, *more* pernicious to the constitution, *than* that on which the Middlesex election was determined."—JUNIUS. *Letters.*

In this sentence "than" is made to do duty in connexion with *as* and *more*—correctly, of course, with regard to the latter, but not so as far as the former is concerned. The writer should have said:—

"The majority of them established another doctrine as false in itself as that on which the Middlesex election was determined, and, if possible, more pernicious to the constitution."

The following is a somewhat similar instance:—

"You may infuse the sentiment by a ray of light, no *thicker*, nor one thousand part *so* thick, *as* the finest needle."—WILSON. *Recreations.*

Here we have the word "than" incorrectly

omitted after "thicker;" unless the writer wished to introduce the phrase "no thicker as."

Another instance of the misuse of "than" occurs in connexion with the verb "prefer," thus:—

"Above all, it should *prefer* to leave a point untaught, *than* to teach it in a way that must be unlearned."—LATHAM. *English Language.*

Analogous to these is the fault in the following sentence, in which the writer substitutes the words "but rather" for the word "as:"—

"This does not *so much* seem to be owing to the want of physical powers, *but rather* to the absence of vehemence."—ALISON. *Essay on British Theatre.*

Here is another instance:—

"*Scarcely* had he uttered the fatal word *than* the fairy disappeared."—SOANE. *New Curiosities of Literature.*

In this example, as in most cases of the kind, the error arises from the circumstance that the writer, while committing one word to paper, is thinking of another. What Soane had in his head was the expression "no sooner;" but he forgot that "scarcely" requires "when" after it.

The article "the."

In certain phrases where the present participle is employed as a noun, the definite article may be used or omitted before it. If used, the participle, like any other noun in the same circumstances,

should be followed by the preposition "of." Here is a sentence which sins against this rule:—

"The battle of Eylau should have been the signal for *the* contracting the closest alliance with the Russian government." —Alison. *History of Europe.*

If the article be omitted before the participle, the preposition should be omitted also. The following sentences are therefore incorrect:—

"In constructing and depicting *of* characters, Werner indeed is little better than a mannerist."—Carlyle. *Essay on Werner.*

"In reading *of* poetry, above all, what forces, through this ignorance, are lost!"—Trench. *English, Past and Present.*

Only.

There is, perhaps, in the English language, no expression that is so frequently misapplied, or that contributes so much to confuse the writer's meaning, as the word *only*. Its import is oftener determined by the sound than by the sense. It is sometimes placed before, and sometimes after, the word upon which it is intended to bear; and in the hurry or carelessness of composition, is frequently thrown in between two words, with direct reference to one of them, in the writer's intention, but with equal applicability to the other. Numerous instances might be quoted, from our best writers, of the ambiguity and confusion occasioned by a want of attention to the proper place of this word. For the present,

however, I shall confine myself to the two chief circumstances in which it is misemployed. The first is when *only* is placed in a different part of the sentence from that in which it should be; the second, when it is put instead of *alone*. Here are some examples of the former inaccuracy.

Gifford, speaking of the conduct of the actors towards Charles II., remarks:—

"One wretched actor *only* deserted the sovereign."

The writer meant to say that *only one* actor had deserted the sovereign; but the word *only* not being in its proper place, the meaning is that the actor *only deserted* the sovereign, in the sense that his conduct did not amount to an actual betrayal of him.

"One species of bread, of coarse quality, was *only* allowed to be baked."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

The sense of this is, that the bread was *only allowed* to be baked, but not *ordered* to be so. The phrase, to express the writer's meaning, should stand thus:—

"*Only one* species of bread, of coarse quality, was allowed to be baked."

"He found himself at a loss to display his powers of criticism, *only* by lavishing his praise."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities.*

This should be:—

"It was *only* by lavishing his praise that he was able to display his powers of criticism."

In the following instances, *only* is incorrectly put for *alone* :—

" No book has been published since your departure of which much notice is taken. Faction *only* fills the town with pamphlets, and greater subjects are forgotten."—Dr. Johnson. *Letter to Rev. Mr. White.*

The Doctor meant to say that faction *alone* gave rise to the pamphlets; but the sentence will admit of the construction that faction did *no more than fill* the town with pamphlets.

" The light must not be suffered to conceal from us the real standard, by which *only* his greatness can be determined."—D'Israeli. *Quarrels of Authors.*

Here the writer, instead of telling us, as he intended, that the standard is the only thing that can determine the greatness, tells us that the greatness is the only thing to be determined by the standard.

" It is a hereditary aristocracy which alone can be depended upon in such a contest, because it *only* possesses lasting interests which are liable to be affected by the efforts of tyranny." —Alison. *History of Europe.*

In this example the sense and the vigour of the sentence are alike marred by the use of *only* instead of *alone*.

This use of " only " for " alone " may be allowable in poetry, as in this line in Dryden :—

" Death *only* this mysterious truth unfolds."

Or this in Lee :—

" The dead are *only* happy and the dying."

But in prose composition, where the writer is unfettered by any considerations of rhythm, it is altogether inexcusable.

Wrong Preposition.

A noticeable error is the use of one preposition for another. Here are some examples:—

"The Italian universities were forced to send for their professors *from* Spain and France."—HALLAM. *Literature of Europe.*

"He withdrew to a little distance from the walls, and sent for heavy artillery *from* Pampeluna and Bayonne."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

"Two of the guns which had been blown up were found to be still serviceable. Two more were sent for *from* Waterford."—MACAULAY. *History of England.*

This is one of those errors so frequent in modern prose, and which are referable to a common origin. In point of fact, the writers have one phrase in their mind and another on paper. The professors are to *come from* Spain and France, and the artillery *from* Pampeluna, Bayonne, and Waterford; and hence the word *from*. But if those great historians had paid attention to the form which their thought was assuming on paper, they would have employed the word *to* instead of *from*. We send *to* a place for a thing: and when we talk of sending *from* a place for a thing, we mean to speak of the place where we are at the time of sending, and not of the place to which we send. For instance, Macaulay, speaking of

an order issued by King William at the siege of Limerick, says:—

"Two more guns were sent for *from* Waterford."

Surely it was *from* Limerick that the guns were sent for, and *to* Waterford where the guns were.

The following are further examples of the misemployment of one preposition for another:—

"The abhorrence of the vast majority of the people *to* its provisions." — ALISON. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

"Such were the difficulties *with* which the question was involved."—*Ibid.*

Here again the error is referable to the same cause. In the first sentence the writer is thinking of "aversion." We say "aversion *to* a thing"—"abhorrence *of* a thing." In the second he is thinking of "beset." We say "beset *with* difficulties"—"involved *in* difficulties."

"The accounts they gave of the favourable reception of their writings *with* the public."—FRANKLIN. *Essays.*

"Napoleon sought to ally himself by marriage with the royal families in Europe, to ingraft himself *to* an old imperial tree."—CHANNING. *Essay on Napoleon.*

In the former sentence "with" should be "by;" in the latter, "to" should be "on."

"We shall therefore enumerate the principal figures of speech, and give *them* some explanation. — MURRAY. *Appendix to English Grammar.*

In this sentence there is a preposition understood after "them;" but it is not "to," as the writer intended. "To explain a figure of speech," and "to give it an explanation," are not the same thing. Murray should have said "and give some explanation *of* them."

"*Of* various natural and acquired excellence it is hard to say whether the British or French soldiers were the most admirable."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

Here the word "of" is erroneously put instead of "for." It is probable that when the writer commenced the sentence, he intended to close it thus:—

"Of various natural and acquired excellence it is hard to say whether the British or French soldiers *afforded the most admirable example.*"

"Meanwhile the losses sustained *by* the partisan warfare in his rear, and the frightful progress of famine and disease, rendered it indispensable for the French army to move."—*Ibid.*

Here the "by" should be "from," or "in consequence of:" otherwise we should have to believe that the partisan warfare sustained the losses, instead of inflicting them.

Hereafter—Henceforth.

Can anything be more clear than the difference of meaning between these two words? And yet, how often do we see them misapplied. Here is an instance from Sir A. Alison:—

"It was in this situation of affairs that Sir Arthur Wel-

lesley—who shall *hereafter* be called Wellington—landed at Lisbon."—*History of Europe.*

"Hereafter" means "at some future period," and it is quite true that the title of "Wellington" was not conferred till a future period; but that is not what the historian intended to express. His meaning is that *in future*, when speaking of Sir A. Wellesley, he will describe him by the title of "Wellington." "Henceforth," therefore, is the word he should have employed.

Whither—Thither.

These words also are often confounded or misapplied. Examples:—

"Nor are the groans of the father altogether without relief; for they are gone *whither* they *came*."—Wilson. *Recreations of C. North.*

"Gone" requires "whither," but "came" requires "whence;" and as "whither" is inapplicable to two terms of such opposite tendency as "go" and "come," the writer should have said:—

"They are gone to the place whence they came."

"From that place the Minden was sent to Gibraltar, and *thither* the whole fleet *arrived* on the 9th August."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

"Ney marched direct for Lugo, and on the 29th met Marshal Soult at that place, *whither* he had *arrived* on his retreat from Portugal."—*Ibid.*

In these sentences we have "thither," "whither," improperly put for "there," "where." If the word "arrive" presupposes motion, it, at the same time, indicates that the motion is at an end. Hence we say "arrive at," not "arrive to." Now, the preposition contained in such words as "thither," "whither," is *to*, not *at*.

Equal as.

We sometimes meet with "equal as," instead of "equal to," the word "same" being uppermost in the writer's mind. Here is an example :—

"For the history of the Empire no works exist of *equal* ability or authority *as* those regarding the Revolution."—Alison. *History of Europe.*

Same as—Same with.

These locutions, though of different import, are often confounded. We say "the same as," when we mean to express complete similarity, as :—"Nouns are the same as substantives." And we say "the same with," when we wish to express similarity in some particular point or circumstance, as :—

"The verb 'to work' is perfectly regular, for it has *ed* added to it in order to form the past time. It is the *same with* the verb 'to walk,' and many others."—Cobbett. *English Grammar.*

The meaning of this is, not that the verbs "to work" and "to walk" are identical; but that

they are in the same predicament, having this quality in common, that they end in *ed*.

The confounding of these expressions has led certain writers to use "same with" where "same as" would have been more correct. Examples:—

"Wisdom is not the *same with* understanding, talents, capacity, ability, sagacity, sense, or prudence—not the *same with* any of these."—TAYLOR. *Notes from Books.*

"Skinner, it is well known, held the *same* political opinions *with* his illustrious friend."—MACAULAY. *Essay on Milton.*

"A rhymed essay, with most people, is the *same* thing *with* a rhapsody."—GILFILLAN. *Literary Portraits.*

"Satan, towering to the sky, was the *same with* Satan, lurking in the toad."—*Ibid.*

Adverbs in the wrong place.

"The sublime Longinus, in *somewhat a* later period, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens."—GIBBON. *Decline and Fall.*

"It is the repetition of the period in *somewhat a* different form."—BLAIR. *Lectures.*

"The French theatre has produced a species of comedy of *still a* graver turn."—*Ibid.*

In these examples the adverbs "somewhat" and "still" should follow, instead of preceding, the article "a."

Double Superlatives.

There are certain adjectives which do not admit of degrees of comparison, such as *entire*, *universal*,

and a few others. The following sentences are examples of this inaccuracy :—

"Money, in a word, is the *most universal* incitement of human misery."—GIBBON. *Decline and Fall.*

"The *most entirely* in his confidence were not aware of what he intended."—ALISON. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

True, we have in Holy Writ the expression "the *most* highest;" and Shakspeare, in *Julius Cæsar*, speaks of "the *most* unkindest cut of all." But, while the former expression is remarkable for its vigour, and the latter for its quaintness, there is no reason why we should concede to vulgar prose, without either quaintness or vigour to recommend it, that license which is the privilege of inspiration, whether in the prophet or the poet.

But.

A common error even in the most elegant writers, is the use of "but" instead of "that," in phrases where such verbs as "to question," "to doubt," are employed. Examples :—

"I make no doubt *but* you are now safely lodged in your own habitation."—JOHNSON. *Letter to Boswell, 27th May,* 1775.

"I make no doubt *but* you, sir, can help him through his difficulties."—IDEM. *Letter to Rev. Dr. Edwards, 2nd Nov.,* 1778.

"I do not question *but* they have done what is usually called the king's business."—JUNIUS. *Letters.*

In the following examples the "but" is redundant:—

"There can be no question *but* that both the language and the characters must be Hebrew."—SOUTHEY. *The Doctor.*

"He never doubts *but* that he knows their intention."—TRENCH. *English, Past and Present.*

Or and Nor.

The commonest error with regard to these conjunctions, is the use of "or" instead of "nor." Of this I shall quote some examples:—

"I demand neither place, pension, exclusive privilege, *or* any other reward whatever."—FRANKLIN. *Essays.*

"He was neither an object of derision to his enemies, *or* of melancholy pity to his friends."—JUNIUS. *Letters.*

"Neither by them *or* me would it be regarded as an objection."—SOUTHEY. *The Doctor.*

The employment of "nor" instead of "or" is not so common. Our old friend, D'Israeli, has this instance:—

"There are few scenes more affecting, *nor* which more deeply engage our sympathy."—*Calamities of Authors.*

"Same," as a Pronoun.

Another of these anomalies relates to the word "same." At first, this term, like its representatives in other languages, was nothing more than a plain, unpretending adjective. After a time, it came to be used as a pronoun in official phraseology, and having found a footing there, it has gradually encroached upon the domain of ordi-

nary prose, usurping the rights of the legitimate pronouns, and displacing them from their hereditary station in the queen's English. "Same" is now, so to speak, the Paul Pry of literary composition. You meet with it in novels, in plays, in sermons, in speeches, and even in the graver themes of history. You can hardly turn a sentence without falling foul of its prim little figure; and the more you desire to avoid it, the more obtrusive it becomes. The stoutest supporter of this pretender to the rank of a pronoun is Mr. Montgomery Martin, a writer whose accuracy of style bears no proportion to his painstaking industry. Of the numerous examples that might be adduced from this writer, of the conversion of "same" into a pronoun, the following are taken from his "History of the Colonies:"—

"After much angry dispute relative to the enormous and illegal exaction of fees, a tariff of the *same* was fixed."

"The jealousy of the Spanish monarch led to a renewed discussion of the territorial right of our settlers, *which* the imbecile ministers of Charles II. so far admitted, as to direct the governor of Jamaica to inquire into the *same*."

Here the word "same" evidently refers to "which;" but what does "which" refer to? Not to "jealousy;" it would be nonsense to say that they admitted the king's jealousy: not to "discussion;" for then it should be "permitted" and not "admitted:" not to "right;" that would be

the contrary of the writer's meaning. To discover that meaning we must look for it, less in what is expressed than in what is understood; and in this way we shall find that what the ministers admitted, were "the grounds" of the monarch's jealousy.

The following are further examples of this fault:—

"She looked at her own neat white stockings, and thought how glad she should be to cover their poor feet with the *same*."—LAMB. *Essays of Elia.*

"Providence had unspeakably honoured him by revealing this grand truth, saving him from death and darkness. He therefore was bound to make known the *same* to all creatures."—CARLYLE. *Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

"There is no doubt upon his mind, first as to every part of his creed; and next as to his individual capacity for expounding the *same*."—GILFILLAN. *Literary Portraits.*

"It was also ordered that all persons professing to teach the doctrine of the ancient philosophers, should explain in what respects the *same* differed from the established faith."—ROSCOE. *Life of Leo X.*

"How much more to them than to us, so long as we are ignorant of the *same*, would these words have conveyed."—TRENCH. *English Past and Present.*

In these instances both the grammar and the sense would be improved by the use of the pronouns instead of *same*.

Shall and Will.

Among grammatical inaccuracies we must not omit to mention the indiscriminate use of the

auxiliaries *shall* and *will*. The Irish are confessedly the greatest blunderers in this respect; yet, it would be no difficult matter to show that the fault is by no means peculiar to them. Here are some examples in which *will* is erroneously put for *shall*.

"We know to what causes our past reverses have been owing, and we *will* have ourselves to blame, if they are again incurred."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

"If we look within the rough and awkward outside, we *will* be richly rewarded by its perusal."—GILFILLAN. *Literary Portraits.*

In the course of these remarks we have had occasion to cite some inaccuracies from the "Great Cham of Literature." That he was not always attentive to the proper use of his *shalls* and *wills*, is exemplified in the following passage:—

"You must make haste and gather me all you can, and do it quickly, or I *will* and *shall* do without it."—JOHNSON. *Letter to Boswell*, 1774.

This is a curious anti-climax. The Doctor meant to lay a particular stress upon the latter of the auxiliaries; and if he had employed them in the second or third person, the order in which they stand would have been correct. But "shall," in the first person, merely announces the intention to do a thing—"will," the resolution to do it. Johnson should therefore have said: "I shall and will do without it." When he said, "I *will*," he

expressed a determination to which *shall* adds nothing but preposterousness. The case were different if he had begun with *shall*. The announcement of an intention to do a thing may be followed, without impropriety, by expressing a resolution to do it.

Perfect and Imperfect Tenses.

Next to *shall* and *will* there is no point in English composition that presents such a stumbling-block as the "perfect" and "imperfect" tenses. The general rule I take to be as follows:— When the time spoken of is connected with the *present*, in some manner either expressed or implied, then the perfect tense should be used. We say, "I *have written* to him this year, this month, this week, this day;" and not, "I *wrote* to him this year, this month, this week, this day." When the time spoken of is *past*, and there is nothing either expressed or implied to connect it with the present, the imperfect tense should be used. Thus, we say "I *wrote* to him last year, last month, last week, yesterday;" and not, "I *have written* to him last year, last month, last week, yesterday." As regards the expression "this morning," it admits of either tense, according to the time at which it is employed. If in the forenoon, we say, "I *have written* to him this morning;" if in the afternoon, we must treat it as a division

of time that is past, and say, "I *wrote* to him this morning."

The following examples will illustrate the first part of this rule.

1. "I *have written* to him twice these ten years." Here the word "these" connects the time with the *present*, and it would be incorrect to say "I *wrote* to him twice these ten years."

2. "I *have written* to him several times since I received his reply." The meaning here is "from the time of receiving his reply to the *present* time;" and it would be inaccurate to say "I *wrote* to him several times since I received his reply."

In explanation of the second part of the rule, it may be stated that the imperfect tense is employed in the following instances:—

1. When a particular day or division of time is specified; as, "I wrote to him on the *first* of January."

2. When a specified period of time has elapsed since the thing is stated to have occurred; as, "I wrote to him ten years *ago*."

3. When the time, without being specified, is made to precede an event that is past; as, "I wrote to him several times *before* I received his reply."

The best apology for the triteness of these remarks is the frequency with which the tenses in question are confounded or misapplied. From

numerous instances that might be cited from our most approved writers, I have selected the following, in which the perfect tense is incorrectly employed instead of the imperfect.

"Our club *has recommenced* last Friday, but I was not there." JOHNSON. *Letter to Boswell*, 1777.

"You may remember I *have* formerly *talked* with you about a military dictionary."—IDEM. *Letter* (without date) *to Mr. Cave.*

"It is now about four hundred years since the art of multiplying books *has been* discovered."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities.*

"Many years after this article was written, *has appeared* the history of English Dramatic Poetry by Mr. Collier."—*Ibid.*

"You may do what you *have done* a century ago, made the Catholics worse than Helots."—SYDNEY SMITH. *Essays.*

"Formerly we *have conversed*, together with Pericles, on this extraordinary man."—SAVAGE LANDOR. *Pericles and Aspasia.*

"During the last century no prime minister, however powerful, *has become* rich in office."—MACAULAY. *History of England.*

"Of this admirable work a subsequent edition *has been* published in 1822."—ALISON. *Essay on Humboldt.*

"Out of the walls of Cadiz, in 1810 and 1811, *has issued* the cloud that now overspreads the world."—IDEM. *History of Europe.*

In these sentences the words in italics should be repectively "recommenced"—"talked"—"was"—"appeared"—"did"—"conversed"—"became"—"was"—"issued." In every case the time is unconnected with the present, or specified as past, and the imperfect tense should have been employed.

Other Errors in regard to the Moods and Tenses.

In the following example the indicative is improperly put for the subjunctive. "Writes" should be "write" or "should write:"—

"With all these objections (and we only mention them in case Mr. Hope *writes* again) there are few books that contain passages of greater power."—SYDNEY SMITH. *Essays.*

Sir A. Alison has a passage in which the imperfect tense of the indicative is used instead of the subjunctive:—

"If that system *were* rigorously carried into execution—if a first imprisonment *was* in every instance made so long as to teach the young novice in crime an honest trade, the continual stream of depravity which now pollutes the British islands would be lessened."—*History of Europe.*

Here the writer, speaking hypothetically, begins very properly with the subjunctive mood; but in the very next line, which requires the same mood, he abandons it for the indicative, and thus makes nonsense of the sentence.

Here is another example:—

"Of Montgomery's prose we might say much that *was* favourable."—GILFILLAN. *Literary Portraits.*

Chenevix has an instance of the opposite fault, where he uses the subjunctive instead of the indicative:—

"Henry V., indeed, if Shakespeare *were* well informed,

was a dexterous wooer in his way."—*Essay on National Character.*

In the following example we have one of the greatest of English classics unaccountably employing a *past* tense to express a *future* :—

"This paper should properly *have appeared* to-morrow."—JUNIUS. *Private Letter*, No. 24.

There is a misapplication of the verb which is of common occurrence even in some of our ablest writers; and which consists in the use of the infinitive in the past tense, instead of the infinitive present. Examples :—

"Had this been the fate of Tasso, he would have been able *to have celebrated* the condescension of your majesty in noble language."—JOHNSON. *Dedication of Hoole's Tranlation of Tasso.*

"Gray might perhaps have been able *to have rendered* him more temperate in his political views."—SOUTHEY. *The Doctor.*

"Byron's modesty was shocked at the sight of waltzing, which he would not have suffered the Guiccioli *to have indulged* in even with her own husband."—WILSON. *Recreations of C. North.*

"Swift, but a few months before, was willing *to have hazarded* all the horrors of a civil war."—JEFFREY. *Essays.*

"That he was willing *to have made* his peace with Walpole is admitted by Mr. Scott."—*Ibid.*

"It was universally expected that his first act, upon being elevated to the office of Prince Regent, would have been *to have sent* for Lords Grey and Grenville."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

"Those who would gladly have seen the Anglo-Saxon *to*

have predominated over the Latin element of our language."—TRENCH. *English, Past and Present.*

In these examples the words in italics should be "to celebrate," "to render," "to indulge," "to hazard," "to make," to send," "to predominate."

Present Participle for the Infinitive Mood.

Of this inaccuracy there are several instances in George Gilfillan, a writer who, whatever may be his defects of style (and they are manifold, especially in his first "Gallery of Literary Portraits"), is generally very attentive to the requirements of grammar. The following are examples:—

"It is easy *distinguishing* the rude fragment of a rock from the splinter of a statue."—*Literary Portraits.*

"It was great in him *promoting* one to whom he had done some wrong."—*Ibid.*

"It were indeed worth while *inquiring* how much of this coolness resulted from Crabbe's early practice as a surgeon."—*Ibid.*

"How fine sometimes it is *accompanying* the prattle of a beautiful child."—*Ibid.*

"It were not difficult *retorting* upon many passages of his own writing."—*Ibid.*

"It is indeed ludicrous *looking* back through the vista of forty years."—*Ibid.*

"It were worth while *contrasting* its estimate of Mahometanism with that of Carlyle."—*Ibid.*

"It was fine *taking* it out and *finding* in it a conductor to our own surcharged emotions."—*Ibid.*

SLANG TERMS AND FOREIGN WORDS.

The fifth blemish in English prose is the profusion of slang and foreign words by which it is disfigured. For the use of slang we have always shown a growing partiality; but its prevalence of late years is mainly owing to that quintessence of Rebellion and Radicalism; that amalgamation of Socialism and Slavery; that galaxy of Stars and Stripes; our encroaching, annexing, intermeddling, repudiating friend; our outlandish, off-handish, whole-hoggish, go-a-headish brother, Jonathan Yankee.

The foreign words may be classed as follows :— 1. Words relating to the art of war, most of which we have borrowed from the French. These have been adopted into the language, and are to be found in our dictionaries. 2. Theatrical and musical terms, which we have chiefly received from the Italians and French, and which are to be met with in the newspaper reports of our public entertainments. 3. Words of a technical import, which express matters and modes of being, originally foreign to our national habits, and for which, generally speaking, we have no equivalent terms. My list of these amounts to no less than two hundred and fifty. 4. Words which express ideas common to the homes and bosoms of all

men, and for which we possess corresponding terms, or expressions of a nearly similar import. Of this class I have noted upwards of one hundred and fifty that are constantly employed, without necessity, by our elegant writers. 5. Latin words which, with or without necessity, have become of daily use. By these I do not mean the words originally derived from the Latin, and which, both as to form and meaning, are now completely incorporated into the language. Neither do I allude to those Latin words and sentences, which enter into, what is called, "legal phraseology." The language of the law is a language apart. Its obscurity, diffuseness, stilted march and childish repetitions, are a disgrace to our age and country. The lawyers know best how to unravel its intricacies, and to them may be left the congenial task. The Latin words I speak of are those which, whether originally introduced into legal language or not, have now become of common use among our popular authors. The number of such words that has come under my notice exceeds three hundred.

Among these different classes of foreign words, there are some which the most fastidious stickler for unadulterated English is occasionally compelled to employ. This is an evil for which there is now no remedy, and from which indeed no modern language is wholly exempt. But the same cannot be said of the generality of such

expressions; and while the French and Latin words, for which we have terms of a nearly corresponding import, should be sparingly introduced, those for which we have acknowledged synonymes, should be discarded by every one who has the slightest pretension to be reckoned a correct writer.

It is chiefly to our modern novelists that we are indebted for this foreign flippancy and conceit. Were we to judge from the profusion of exotics with which those writers are continually embellishing their productions, exchanging the vitality and bloom of their native tongue for the gaudiness and glitter of Italian or French, we should be led to form a very unfavourable opinion of the copiousness of the English language. Happily, the use of such expressions bespeaks rather the poverty of the writer's mind than that of our noble mother-tongue.

In this, as in everything else, our Gallic friends rush into the opposite extreme. They have a rooted dislike to foreign words and idioms, and are very slow in adopting them. Their own language they regard as the most perfect and classical of all modern languages; and it is only on compulsion, and for want of corresponding terms, that they condescend to borrow from their neighbours. Even when they do adopt a new word, they handle it with such rudeness and so disfigure its spelling, that its parent tongue

would not know it again. They strip it by degrees of its foreign dress, and make it assume the costume of the country. When sufficiently disguised, they introduce it to their literary societies; and lest it should be said that any countenance or encouragement is given to the "detested foreigner," the Academy is requested to grant it *letters* of naturalization. There is that plain, John-Bullish, unmistakable, easily-pronounced, little word "lord." Well! they will not have him in his native simplicity; but as they generally find him accompanied by a page, in the person of the pronoun "my," they toss the lord and his page in the same blanket, and then turn them adrift in the Siamese character of "milord." It is by this process that our "beefsteak" is battered into a "bifteck," and that "plum-pudding" assumes all the consistency of a "pouding de plomb."

I remember the time when the French wrote the word "partner" as an English word, with all the signs of its foreign extraction. They afterwards altered it to "partnère;" and, as if it was not sufficiently disguised in this dress, they have transformed it at last into "parte-naire," as it is now commonly written. The italics and inverted commas have been dropped, and the spelling is as completely French, as if the word had been in use since the days of Philippe le Bel. Of a still more curious nature

is the history of the word "redingote," that word being neither more nor less than our English "riding-coat;" but so artfully appropriated by our ingenious neighbours, as to pass for an article of French manufacture. And now our fashionable tailors advertise their "redingotes," and our fashionable folk purchase them, being unconscious the while that they are borrowing an expression which our Gallic friends originally stole from us.

So much for the dislike of the French to foreign words and modes of expression. It is clear that, so far as language is concerned, they will have no *partnership* with us: and if they sometimes make use of an English word, they do so, like Beranger, only to express their derision or contempt:—

"God damn! moi j'aime les Anglais."

BLUNDERS.

"Nonsense often escapes being detected both by the writer and the reader."

Dr. Campbell. *Rhetorie.*

BLUNDERS.

Among the many blemishes that disfigure English prose, not the least noticeable is a want of perspicuity. Of this defect I have cited some examples in the chapter on "Composition." It occurs, however, so frequently in the more offensive shape of contradictions, incongruities, and blunders, that I have taken the trouble to collect some samples for the instruction and entertainment of the reader. In accounting for the existence of such things, we are accustomed to assign them to that intellectual "drowsiness," from which even honest Homer was not exempt; but we do not perceive that this infirmity is daily assuming a more widespread and contagious character; and that the drowsiness which was merely *occasional* among the ancients, has degenerated in our time into *habitual* torpor.

Now for our samples :—

"The robber was confined in an empty garret, *three stories high*, from which it seemed impossible for him to escape."—Smollett. *Roderick Random.*

"A garret three stories high," is a contradiction in terms. It was the house, and not the garret, that was three stories high.

"The *back front* of the academy is handsome, but, like the other to the street, one cannot stand back enough to see it in any proportion, unless in a barge moored in the middle of the Thames."—H. WALPOLE. *Letter to Mason.*

The incongruity here consists in coupling such terms as "back" and "front."

"If a young writer should ask, after all, what is the best way of knowing good poets from bad, the best poets from the next best, and so on? The answer is, the only and twofold way. First, the perusal of the best poets with the greatest attention; and second, the cultivation of that love of truth and beauty which made them what they are."—LEIGH HUNT. *Imagination and Fancy.*

In this passage the contradiction and absurdity are quite amusing. Hunt tells us there is but one way of knowing good poets from bad, and that that *one* way is *two* ways! He then informs us that this only and twofold way is no way at all. To tell a young writer that the way to know good poets from bad, is "to peruse the good," is to suppose him already possessed of the very knowledge he is in search of.

"A working man is more worthy of honour than a titled *plunderer* who lives in *idleness*." — COBBETT. *English Grammar.*

In his anxiety to disparage the aristocracy and bespatter them on all occasions, Cobbett is often betrayed into the use of epithets which his cooler

judgment would have rejected. In the example before us he talks of a *plunderer* who lives in *idleness*, without perceiving that his words express a glaring contradiction. True, a man may plunder by means of his agents, as well as in his own person; but with that we have nothing to do here. The terms used are what we must consider; and it is no more consistent with sense to talk of an "idle plunderer," than of an "idle libeller," or an "idle highway robber." One of the expressions implies a state of being which excludes the other.

"There is a certain *tune* in every language, to which the ear of a native is set, and which often decides on the preferable pronunciation, though entirely *ignorant* of the reasons for it."—WALKER. *Preface to Dictionary.*

In this phrase the writer describes a *tune*, as being *ignorant* of the reasons for its *decision*.

"It is certain Warburton's *infidelity* was greatly *suspected*."—D'ISRAELI. *Quarrels of Authors.*

Here, as is usual with this writer, we have the contrary of what he means. He intended to say that Warburton's *belief* in Christianity was suspected; or that he was suspected of infidelity.

"No one as yet had exhibited the structure of the *human* kidneys, Vesalius having only examined *them* in dogs."—HALLAM. *Literature of Europe.*

Human kidneys in dogs! Talk of Irish bulls after that.

"Of all species of authorship, faithful and satisfactory biography is the most difficult. The impossibility of being certain of facts is the first stumbling-block; the *risk* of drawing *right* conclusions from those you are fortunate enough to obtain, is the next."—JERDAN. *Autobiography.*

When Jerdan wrote *risk* he was thinking of *difficulty*. To none but a person intent upon drawing *wrong* conclusions, would it ever occur that there could be any *risk* in drawing *right* ones.

"The tumbling down of fragments from the mountain-side by raging torrents or a *partial* earthquake."—WILSON. *Recreations of Christopher North.*

We cannot speak of a thing as being *partial*, unless we know it as a *whole*. Now, who ever heard of a *whole earthquake?* We may say "a *violent* earthquake;" a "*slight* earthquake;" but not a "*partial* earthquake." All earthquakes are partial, and will continue so till the "Crack of Doom."

"The most *ancient* treatise by a *modern* on this subject, is said to be by a French physician."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities of Literature.*

This requires no comment. The words "ancient" and "modern" being commonly used in contradistinction to each other, the application of them to the same object is clearly absurd.

Mrs. Foster has a parallel to this, where she remarks:—

"Dr. George Campbell's 'Philosophy of Rhetoric' is con-

sidered the best work on the subject, in *modern* times, *since Aristotle*."—*Handbook of European Literature.*

"Richelieu's portrait was encircled by a crown of forty rays, in each of which was written the *name* of the celebrated *forty academicians*."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities.*

What that name is which was common to the forty academicians, D'Israeli does not explain. Piron would have conjectured that it was "moins que rien." It should be "one of the names," or "the name of one," &c.

"Father Mathew, in Ireland, effected a reform, once deemed impossible by Church or State—the Reform of Temperance." —Lady Morgan. *Letter to Cardinal Wiseman.*

This is simply Hibernian. In the confusion of her ideas, and her hurry to express them, Lady Morgan puts one thing for another, and would have us believe that what Father Mathew reformed was the virtue of temperance. The expression, "the Temperance Reform" (the reform which results in temperance, or has temperance for its object) would not have been incorrect; but the preposition "of" alters the sense, and its objective case can be no other than the thing that is reformed. We reform vices and not virtues.

"The ills that darken the life of *man* have their rise in the malevolence and ill-nature of his *fellows*."—Kirke White. *Preface to Poems.*

Each individual man has a fellow in every other man; but *man*, expressing, as in the instance

before us, the whole human race, has no fellows. The phrase should be:—

"The ills that darken the life of man have their rise in his *own* malevolence and ill-nature."

"James invited him to court, and *showered* on him, with a prodigal hand, the *cornucopia* of royal patronage."—D'Israeli. *Curiosities.*

This is what invariably happens to D'Israeli, whenever he goes out of his way for a Sam-Johnsonish epithet. "To shower a cornucopia" is not more correct than "to shoot a quiver," the contents in each case being what is showered or shot; unless we adopt the Latin metaphor of putting for the contents the thing that contains.

"The age wants a Christendom where the character of Christ—like that of Hamlet—is not omitted by special desire."—Gilfillan. *Literary Portraits.*

What has the character of Hamlet to do with Christendom, so as to be either omitted or included therein? This is surely to carry the license of an ellipsis a little too far. Other writers, when introducing this simile, speak of the character of Hamlet *in the play.*

"Channing's mind was planted as thick with *thoughts*, as a *backwood* of his own magnificent land."—*Ibid.*

Here is a discovery worthy of the age: a *backwood* planted with *thoughts!* What a glorious harvest for the writers of America! Who, after

that, will venture to reproach them with poverty of thought?

"To one so gifted in the prodigality of Heaven, can we *approach* in any other *attitude* than that of prostration?"—*Ibid.*

The writer here combines, in one action, two attitudes which are simultaneously impossible. A man may approach another, and *then* prostrate himself; but while he is approaching, he cannot be in an attitude of *prostration*. Such a feat could only be performed by an individual who had learnt to advance on his belly.

"The separation did not take place till after the language had attained the *ripeness* of *maturity*."—TRENCH. *English, Past and Present.*

As we improve in the "study of words," perhaps some future Trench may be able to point out the difference between "ripeness" and "maturity." According to our "English, Past and Present," these words are as perfectly synonymous as any two in the language.

"The *whole* physiological theory of Paracelsus consisted, for *the most part*, in the application of the Cabbala to the explaining of the functions of the body." — SOANE. *New Curiosities of Literature.*

We sometimes hear of a *part* being put for the *whole;* but here we have the *whole* reduced to a *part*. Of this confusion of *wholes* and *parts* the following affords another notable instance:—

"Cervantes soon gave to the world the first part of his

inimitable *Don Quixote*, and the success of this *part* quickly led to the production of the *whole*."—Mrs. Foster. *Handbook of European Literature.*

To say that the *part* already published led to the production of the *whole*, and not of the *remainder*, as common sense would suggest, is as much as to say that the *part* led to its *own* production!

"William Cobbett was a popular but inconsistent political writer, who wrote *upon* momentary impulse."—*Ibid.*

A treatise by Cobbett, upon such a theme as "momentary impulse," is a literary curiosity which has not yet been given to the world.

"I presume that the sentence which the woman *underwent* was not *executed*."—Alfred Gatty, in *Notes and Queries.*

The blunder here is occasioned by the writer describing the sentence as having been *undergone*, when he meant to speak of it only as *pronounced*, or *awarded;* for if the woman *underwent* the sentence, it is clear that the sentence must have been *executed.*

"Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olauis, king of Norway, invaded England, and *spreading themselves in bodies* over the kingdom, committed many and cruel depredations."—Merryweather. *Bibliomania.*

The writer, of course, though he does not say a word about it, saw with his mind's eye, the two kings, *accompanied by their armies;* but if this could justify him in describing the kings *alone*,

as "spreading themselves in bodies over the kingdom," then there never was an Irish bull that might not be explained on the same charitable principle.

"The style is uncouth and hard; but with *great defects of style, which* should be the source of perpetual delight, no long poem will be read."—HALLAM. *Literature of Europe.*

Hallam intended the word "style," and that alone, as the antecedent to "which;" but if he had taken the trouble to reconsider the phrase, he would have perceived that, as it stands, "great defects of style" is made the antecedent. Upon these words the main stress is laid, so that we are left to infer that the writer reckons "great defects of style" among the sources of "perpetual delight."

"Hence he considered marriage *with* a modern political economist, as very dangerous."—D'ISRAELI. *Curiosities.*

The writer meant to say, that the person of whom he speaks, agreed in opinion with a political economist, that marriage is a very dangerous thing; but instead of that, he makes the danger to consist in marrying the political economist.

Soane, in his "New Curiosities of Literature," speaking of the shamrock, has the following remark in a foot-note:—

"It is not a little singular that Spenser, who had such good opportunities of knowing the truth, should have described the shamrock as being synonymous with the water-cress; when speaking of the distress to which the Irish were reduced by the

wars in Munster, he says: 'If they found a plot of *watercresses* or *shamrocks*, there they flocked as to a feast for the time.'"

Now, I take it that the singularity in this business is all on the side of Soane himself, who will have it that Spenser intended the particle "or" to express synonymy, instead of what it conveys in its disjunctive capacity. It is obvious that Spenser speaks of *two* different things, just as if he had said: "If they found a plot of *turnips* or *carrots*;" by which no one would suppose him to mean that turnips and carrots are the same thing.

"It is well known that the ancients have *stolen* most of *our* bright thoughts."—JEFFREY. *Essays.*

What Jeffrey meant to say was, that the ancients have anticipated, or forestalled, us in most of our bright thoughts. How, indeed, could they steal from us what they possessed long before we were in existence? It was in the same sense that Donatus, some fifteen centuries ago, gave utterance to the words: "Pereant illi qui, ante nos, nostra dixerunt!" with this difference, that Donatus's imprecation is made in a tone of badinage, and with the full consciousness of its absurdity, as shown by the expression "ante nos nostra;" whereas Jeffrey's remark is made with the simplicity and good faith of one who did not know what he was saying.

Among the numerous conceits that disfigure the poetry of what is called "the Lake School," I may notice the following passage in Wordsworth, where he carries his irreverence so far as to describe as the "daughter of God," the most diabolical of Hell's progeny:—

> "But thy most dread instrument
> In working out a pure intent,
> Is man array'd for mutual slaughter:
> Yea, *carnage is thy daughter*."

What does the Peace Congress say to this? Is it aware that its crusade against war and its horrors is, in effect, a crusade against the children of God? Of course, the poet's disciples are prepared to explain in what sense their great master wished this expression to be understood: but they may spare themselves the trouble. There is no sense, consistent with religion or even common decency, in which *carnage* can be said to be the *daughter* of God. If such poetico-philosophical incongruities were encouraged, the next children of God, of whom we should have an account, would be "murder," "rape," and "incest." On such a principle, there is no piece of blasphemy, however monstrous, that might not admit of explanation and excuse.

Sir A. Alison commences his "Essay on the Fall of Rome" with the following blunder:—

"The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire *is* by far the most remarkable *event* which has occurred in the whole history

of mankind. It is hard to say whether the *former* or the *latter* is most worthy of profound study."

In the first sentence the writer describes the "Rise and Fall" as *one event;* while in the second, by using the words "former" and "latter," he distinctly represents that *one* event as *two.*

In the next page of the same *Essay* we have another sample:—

"But a little consideration must be sufficient to show that these invasions could, without much difficulty, have been withstood, if the *Empire* had possessed the strength which *it did* in the days of the *Republique.*"

How could the *Empire* possess strength in the days of the *Republique*, when it had no existence in those days? Sir Archibald meant to say: "If the *Empire* had possessed the strength *of* the *Republique*," or "which the Republic possessed." Or he might have avoided this confusion by using "people" or "country" instead of "empire."

Here are some further examples from the same writer:—

"The vast agency of general causes upon the progress of mankind now became apparent. *Unseen* powers, like the deities of Homer, in the war of Troy, were *seen* to mingle at every step with the tide of sublunary affairs."—*Essay on Guizot.*

The writer wished to say that the *effects* of the mingling were *seen* or *felt;* instead of which he

tells us that the powers themselves were, at the same time, *unseen* and *seen*.

"Mackintosh's philosophic mind threw a *luminous radiance* over that *intricate* subject, the criminal code."—*History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

Heretofore we have been in the habit of ascribing to "radiance," or light of any kind, the property of *clearing up* what is *obscure;* but it was reserved for Sir Archibald Alison to reveal to the world a luminous radiance, a double-distilled species of light, which has the wonderful effect of *unravelling* what is *intricate.*

"Nor was the actual efficiency of this immense army inferior to *its* imaginative terrors."—*History of Europe.*

The writer is describing the terrors which, on the eve of the Peninsular war, the army of Napoleon, 600,000 strong, was calculated to strike into the public mind; and wishing to say that such terrors had not produced an exaggerated notion of the actual efficiency of that army, he expresses his meaning in the sentence above quoted; from which he leaves us to infer that the terrors he speaks of were *felt* by the army, instead of being *caused* by it; in other words, that this great army of 600,000 men was no less efficient than it was terrified.

"The *soil* and *climate* of Scotland, even where *it* is susceptible of cultivation, is incomparably less favoured by nature than *that* of the southern parts of the island."—*Ibid.*

This sentence contains a twofold blunder; first, we are told that a *climate* is susceptible of *cultivation;* and secondly, that *soil* and *climate* are the same thing, both being represented by the singular *it*.

"This immense empire [Russia], inhabited by a patient and indomitable race, ever ready to *exchange* the luxury and adventure of the south *for* the hardships and monotony of the north."—*Ibid.*

Here the writer says the contrary of what he means. What the Russians are ready to *exchange* —to *give* in exchange—are the hardships and monotony of the north for the luxury and adventure of the south. The meaning would have been clear, if the writer had said "to receive in exchange."

"He will have no difficulty in appreciating *both* the magnitude of the embarrassment, which this resistance imposed on the sovereign, and of the guilt of those who occasioned it."—*Ibid.*

Here the word "both" is applied to "magnitude" alone. The conjunction "and," which follows, does not couple anything with "magnitude:" it couples "embarassment" and "guilt;" and to these, no doubt, the writer intended "both" to apply; but, in that case, he should have placed that word after "magnitude," and not before it.

We have seen Alison apply the word "both" to *one* thing. In the following sentence he says

of *one* contrast that it is *more* than *one* contrast.

"*One* of the many contrasts which strike a stranger most in that extraordinary country, is the strange *contrasts* which *exist* between the nobility and the great body of the people."—*History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

In our next quotation there is a strange confusion of ideas. The writer is descanting on Thiers's practical acquaintance with statesmanship, and by way of contrast he has this remark in reference to Lacretelle, the historian:—

"Inferior in genius to Thiers, and *unacquainted, like him,* with the practical duties of a statesman, M. Lacretelle has still considerable merits."—*Ibid.*

In this sentence the writer, by using *unacquainted* instead of *not acquainted,* says the contrary of what he means. Considered by themselves, these locutions express the same thing; but followed, as in the example before us, by the word "like," they convey different meanings. "Unacquainted, like Thiers," means that Thiers is also "unacquainted;" "not acquainted, like Thiers," means that Thiers is acquainted.

The same writer, speaking of the peasants who flocked into Saragossa at the approach of the French to invest it, has this sentence:—

"But they brought with them, as into Athens when besieged by the Lacedemonians, the seeds of a contagious malady."—*History of Europe.*

And so, Sir Archibald, you would have us believe that the peasantry of Aragon were at Athens, when it was besieged by the Lacedemonians; and that they brought a contagious malady with them into that city!

"The feeble parapet of the wall was soon levelled by the French cannon; and the heroic Spanish gunners had no defence but *bags of earth*, which the citizens replaced as fast as they were shattered by the enemy's shot, *joined* to their own unconquerable courage."—*Ibid.*

Any one can understand how the gunners were reduced to use bags of earth as a means of defence; but how those *bags of earth* were *joined* to the courage of the gunners, is a problem which Sir A. Alison alone is capable of solving.

"The increase of these animals is the most extraordinary instance of *multiplication* which is recorded in the annals of *mankind*."—*Ibid.*

Here the writer is speaking of the horned cattle of South America; and when he tells us it is in the annals of our *own species* that we are to look for instances of the multiplication of such animals, it is hard to say whether he wishes to degrade man to the level of the brute, or exalt the brute to the dignity of man. But perhaps, after all, he meant nothing more than to illustrate the multiplication of *horned cattle*, by presenting us with a sample of his own production, in the shape of a *bull*.

"The noble harbour of the Golden Horn, five miles in length, crowded with all the *flags* of Europe *lying* in its bosom."—*Ibid.*

In this phrase the writer, by an allowable figure of speech, puts a part for the whole, the "flags" for the "ships." But in doing so he should not have coupled with the "flags" the epithet "lying," which is applicable only to the "ships."

"If we would see what the aborigines of this country originally were; what, but for foreign intermixture, *they would still have been*, we have only to look to the inhabitants of the South and West of Ireland, or of the highlands and islands of Scotland."—*Ibid.*

Then, but for the foreign intermixture, the aborigines of England would have lived *till the present time!* The writer, of course, intended to speak of the *descendants* of those aborigines; but he takes good care not to say a word about them.

"The Roman Catholic is the *transition* faith from heathenism to Christianity, retaining enough of forms to attract the illiterate multitude, embracing as much of reality as may sway more enlightened minds and produce innumerable blessings."—*Ibid.*

The sense of this (if indeed it has any sense at all) is that the Roman Catholic religion is a stepping-stone from heathenism to Christianity; that it holds an *intermediate* position between them, partaking of the character of both, but

being neither the one nor the other. Roman Catholicism, then, according to this writer, is not Christianity! Can the power of blundering go farther than this?

"Two great sins—one of *omission* and one of *commission*—have been committed by the states of Europe in modern times." —Alison. *History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

Whatever may be said as to "committing a sin of commission" (as Sir Archibald will have it in his elegant phraseology), to *commit* a sin of *omission* is the height of absurdity. No doubt the writer intended to describe the states of Europe as *guilty* of a sin of omission, or *chargeable* with a sin of omission; instead of which he represents them in the preposterous situation of *doing* and *not doing* at the same time.

"The true mark of the highest class of genius is not universality of fame, but *universal* admiration by the *few* who can really appreciate its highest works."—*Ibid.*

Who but a *universal* blunderer would ever think of applying the epithet *universal* to the admiration which is limited to a *few?*

"External events of no light weight soon, however, occurred, which convinced the heroic princess that her attempt, *for the present at least*, had *permanently* failed of all chance of success." —*Ibid.*

There would be some sense in this, if "permanently" had been omitted, or "completely"

been written in its place. The possibility of *future* success, implied in the words "for the *present at least*," is totally inconsistent with a *permanent* failure.

"To the honor of Government it must be added that no capital sentence was pronounced, and that one of the most serious insurrections recorded in French annals was suppressed *without the shedding of human blood*."—*Ibid.*

The historian is speaking of the insurrection of the 5th June, 1832, on the occasion of the funeral of General Lamarque; and he describes, among other *bloody* conflicts, the desperate one which took place in the cloister of St. Méri, of which he says, "This *bloody* triumph *closed* the contest and *extinguished* the revolt." He then proceeds to enumerate the *killed* and *wounded* on both sides, and complacently winds up by saying that "the insurrection was suppressed *without the shedding of human blood*." Well! will the reader believe that what Sir Archibald means by all this is not, that no human blood was shed *in suppressing* the insurrection, but that no human blood was shed *after* it was suppressed? In short, he wishes to say that none of the surviving insurgents were sentenced to death or executed.

"This is the usual fate of the leaders in such organic changes. They are *continually advancing* before a devouring fire flaming close in their rear. *If they advance* before it, they

for a time save themselves, but they destroy their country; *if they halt*, they destroy themselves, but they may save their country."—*Ibid.*

If the leaders are *continually advancing*, how can they do otherwise than *advance?* how can they *halt?* We are aware that the writer puts the matter hypothetically; but in truth he leaves himself no room for any hypothesis. Had he wished to do so, instead of representing the leaders as *continually advancing* before a devouring fire, he should have described them as simply *beset* by a devouring fire. Then the supposition, "if they advance," might have followed with propriety.

Sir A. Alison is not satisfied with making blunders for himself, he sometimes contrives to put them in the mouths of others; as witness the following instances:—

The historian is describing the inauguration of the cathedral of Cologne on the 15th October, 1841, and he quotes a speech made on the occasion by the king of Prussia, which concludes with these remarks:—

"May the shameful attempts to relax the bonds of concord which unite the German princes and people, and trouble the peace of persuasions, be shattered against them; and may *that spirit* which has interrupted the completion of this sacred edifice, the temple of our country, never reappear among us! *That spirit is the same* as the one which, nine and twenty years ago, burst asunder our chains, and avenged the insults

our country had received under the yoke of the stranger."—*Ibid.*

In the first sentence Alison makes the king of Prussia deprecate the spirit of discord which had prevailed for some time among his subjects, especially on matters of religion, and which had prevented the completion of the cathedral of Cologne. So far all is right. But in the next sentence he makes the king affirm that the *spirit of discord* which produced those untoward consequences, is the *same* as the *spirit of concord* which, nine-and-twenty years before, had been so successfully exerted for the liberation of Germany.

Speaking of the debates in the French Chambers in 1836, on the advantages of retaining the settlement of Algeria, Alison introduces Louis Philippe as giving utterance to the following bull:—

"I love to *listen* to the cannon in Algeria; it is not *heard* in Europe."—*Ibid.*

If the cannon is not *heard* in Europe, how can a man residing in Europe love to *listen* to it? True, one may listen without hearing; but no one in his senses would take pleasure in listening to a thing which he knows he can never hear. It is probable, however, that the words spoken by Louis Philippe do not make him out such a fool as he appears in Alison's translation of them.

There is a species of blunder which consists in the employment of one noun for another, of one verb for another, and so forth. This happens chiefly in three circumstances:—1st, when there is some seeming analogy between the words, so as to induce the writer to mistake one of them for the other; 2ndly, when the analogy is real, but not sufficient to establish a complete synonymy between the words; and 3rdly, when there is confusion in the writer's mind, or ignorance of the proper signification of the terms he employs. I could fill a volume with examples of this fault from our essayists and historians; but the reader must be satisfied with a few of the most striking instances.

Deteriorate—Derogate—Detract.

The literal meaning of "deteriorate" is "to make worse," "to grow worse;" and yet, how often do we find it used in the sense of "to take from." The *Athenæum*, one of the foremost literary journals in Britain, in a review of Halliwell's "Popular Rhymes and Tales," has this sentence:—

"A number of curious memoranda, put together in a careless, slip-slop manner, that greatly *deteriorates* from their value."—No. 1127.

Here "deteriorates" is incorrectly put for "derogates," or rather "detracts." Another example occurs in Sir B. Lytton:—

"The immense superficies of the public operates two ways in *deteriorating* from the profundity of writers."—*England and the English.*

And Parry Gwynne, in the very first sentence of his "Word to the Wise," has a third instance:—

"Ay, and where much has been achieved, too, and intellectual laurels have been gathered, is it not a reproach that a slatternly mode of expression should sometimes *deteriorate* from the eloquence of the scholar?"

Ay, say we, and where one writer is inveighing against slip-slop, and another against slatternly expressions, is it not amusing to find them making use of language which savours of both?

A correct instance of the use of *deteriorate* is the following from Chenevix:—

"There is not one of them, the loss of which would not now essentially *deteriorate* the general condition of mankind."—*Essay on National Character.*

Mechanism—Machinery.

"It is not so unwieldy as to make it necessary to have recourse to the complex *mechanism* of double elections."—Sydney Smith. *Essays.*

In this sentence "mechanism" is misemployed for "machinery."

Application—Applicability.

"For my own part, I doubt the *application* of the Danish rule to the English language."—Latham. *English Language.*

Here we have "application" incorrectly put for "applicability." What Dr. Latham doubts is that the Danish rule is "applicable," not that it has been *actually applied*, as his words would leave us to suppose.

Participate—Concur.

"We cannot read a page of Virgil without perceiving what has fascinated the world, without *concurring* in the fascination."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

To *concur* in the fascination would be to co-operate with Virgil in producing it. It is not to be supposed, however, that the writer would carry his pretensions beyond a simple *participation* in the thing produced. In this instance, Sir Archibald employs "concur" instead of "participate:" in the following he puts "participate" instead of "concur."

"The act of accusation abounded in the most severe and cutting invectives against the imperial government, in the justice of which posterity, from the evidence of facts, must almost entirely *participate*."—*Ibid.*

Overspread—Pervade.

"The warlike establishments which *pervaded* the country were admirably calculated to foster the growing enthusiasm."—ALISON. *Ibid.*

"This arises from the number of nomad tribes, who, in almost all Asiatic states, *pervade* every part of its territory."—*Ibid.*

Who ever heard of "establishments" or

"tribes" *pervading* a country? Does the writer mean to say that the establishments and the tribes were underground?

Curiously enough, the writer who thus employs pervade" instead of "overspread," has, in another place, "overspread" instead of "pervade:"—

"It is hardly credible to what an extent this passion for everything English *overspread* all classes in the nation."—*Ibid.*

Bind up—Wind up.

"Frederick William was well aware that his political existence was thenceforth *wound up* with the success of Russia in the German war."—ALISON. *Ibid.*

In this sentence "wound up" is improperly put for "bound up." To "wind up" a thing is to bring it to a close or termination, as when we wind up the affairs of a partnership, or an estate. To "bind up" means to unite, to blend. In the phrase above quoted, the writer wished to say that Frederick William's political existence was "inseparably blended"—"interwoven," with the success of Russia; and he should therefore have said "bound up." By using the expression "wound up," he tells us that Frederick William's political existence was *put an end to* by the success of Russia; which is the contrary of what he intended.

That this is no accidental error in Alison, but

a confirmed blunder, the following further instances will show :—

" It is evident, on a dispassionate review of the great debate, and the mighty interests which were *wound up* with it, that the repeal of the Orders in Council was a necessary measure." —*Ibid.*

" Their interests were *wound up* with the maintenance of pacific relations with this country."—*Ibid.*

" When the important questions, now *wound up* with the policy of the East, are considered."—*Ibid.*

" Mahmoud, the last of the race of Othman, with which the existence of the empire was thought to be *wound up*, became the subject of veneration."—*Ibid.*

" General causes are there too much *wound up* with personal ageney."—*Ibid.*

" *Wound up* in his own elevation, yet ever identifying it with the glory of France."—*Ibid.*

" When great interests are *wound up* with the maintenance of a particular position, it must be maintained at all hazards." —*Ibid.*

" Bernadotte's interests were evidently *wound up* with the maintenance of the Russian power in the north of Europe." —*Ibid.*

" A true German in his heart, his whole soul was *wound up* in the welfare of the Fatherland."—*Ibid.*

" Though the passions of the people were in favour of France, their interests were indissolubly *wound up* with those of England."—*Ibid.*

Numerous instances of this absurdity will also be found in Alison's " Essays," and in his " History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon."

Observation—Observance.

" There were but two lines to be taken, either to relax and

modify the regulations which gave offence, or to enforce a more punctual *observation* of them."—HALLAM. *Constitutional History of England.*

Esteem—Deem.

Of the erroneous employment of "esteem" instead of "deem,"—"consider,"—"regard,"—numerous instances are to be found in some of our ablest writers. Examples:—

"The latter pronunciation, though a gross deviation from orthography, will still be *esteemed* the more elegant."—WALKER. *Preface to Dictionary.*

"The question would hardly have been *esteemed* dubious, if the bishops had been at all times sufficiently studious to maintain a character of political independence."—HALLAM. *Constitutional History of England.*

The following are from Sir Walter Scott, in whose writings this inaccuracy is of frequent occurrence:—

"The nobles and clergy might *esteem* themselves fortunate, if they could maintain an effectual defence."—*Life of Napoleon.*

"The apprehension neither altered his firmness upon points to which he *esteemed* his conscience was party, nor changed the general quiet placidity of his temper."—*Ibid.*

"Through most parts of France the king was *esteemed* the enemy whom the people had most to dread."—*Ibid.*

"Such being the case, he would *esteem* himself but little indebted to any one who should blot the harbour of refuge out of the chart."—*Ibid.*

"The true Sans-Culottes were disposed to *esteem* a taste, which could not generally exist without a previous superior education, as something aristocratic."—*Ibid.*

"Buonaparte took for granted his good-will towards his brother-in-law, the Emperor of Austria, and *esteemed* it a crime deserving atonement."—*Ibid.*

"We have elsewhere said that Buonaparte at this time was *esteemed* a steady republican."—*Ibid.*

"The hopes of a complete and final victory over their natural rival and enemy, as the two nations are but over apt to *esteem* each other, presented a flattering prospect."—*Ibid.*

"Buonaparte *esteemed* himself strong enough to obtain a decisive victory without resorting to any such obnoxious violence."—*Ibid.*

It is surprising to what an extent certain phrases, to the exclusion of more accurate modes of speech, take possession of some writers, and drop, as it were, *mechanically* from them. Sir Walter's use of "esteem" is an instance; and such is his partiality for that word, that he generally discards, or seems to ignore, the verbs "deem," "consider," "regard," "hold," "look upon." Such locutions as "to *esteem* one's-self *happy*" are merely nonsensical; but "to *esteem* a thing a *crime*,"—"to *esteem* a man an *enemy*," —border on the ludicrous.

Lay—Lie.

A flagrant example of this species of blunder is the use of *lay* instead of *lie*. "Lie" makes "lay" in the imperfect tense, and this, to a certain extent, may account for the error. It is customary to say "the ship *lays* at anchor,"

instead of "*lies* at anchor;" but the only case in which *lay* can be correctly used in this sense, is when we say "the ship *lay* at anchor,"—"*lay* off and on." In these phrases, however, the word *lay* is no part of the verb *lay:* it is the imperfect tense of the verb *lie*. *Lay* is an active verb; it makes *laid* in the imperfect tense; and "lays" or "laying" cannot be said of a ship or anything else, unless when followed by the objective case—by something that is *laid*. For instance, we say that a hen *lays* an egg; that a mason *lays* a stone upon the mortar. In the same way, if the word be applied to a ship, we must add what the ship *lays*, or is *laying*, as "the ship *lays* her anchor in the sand;" she is "*laying* her cargo on the wharf."

This confounding of *lay* and *lie*, more worthy of the days of barbarism and Babel-building, than of the nineteenth century, originated, no doubt, with that uncompromising specimen of humanity, the British tar. His own irregular movements, and those of his skipper, leave him but little leisure to attend to the movements of the irregular verbs. He finds that *lay* (the imperfect tense of the neuter verb *lie*) is applied to a ship in one instance, and, with characteristic straightforwardness, he makes his verb, "lay," "lays," "laying." From constant repetition the expression has become familiar to his superiors in the service, and it is now used by our naval

chroniclers, annalists, and historians, as a neuter verb, instead of "lie," "lies," "lying."

Of all others.

Add to these the anomaly involved in the expression "of all others," which is becoming very common in our day, but which, like most of the blunders that I have had to notice, arises from the circumstance that the writer is thinking of one mode of expression, while he is committing another to paper. Here is an example from Southey:—

"The place to which she was going was the very spot which, *of all others* in this wide world, she had wished most to see." —*The Doctor.*

This expression is objectionable not only because it may be omitted altogether, without impairing the meaning, but also because it involves a contradiction. How, in the name of common sense, can one thing be *another* thing? One thing may be *above, beyond* other things, or *more than* other things; but it cannot be *of* other things. How, for instance, can the spot which Southey's woman wished to see, be one of *other* spots? What Southey had in his mind was, that the person wished to see the spot in question *more than* all *other* spots. But instead of using *other* to express "difference," "exclusion," as it commonly does, he employs it to express "iden-

tity." To make the sentence correct, the words, "of all others," should have been omitted, or the word for which "others" stands, should have been used in its stead, thus :—

"The place to which she was going was the very spot which, *of all spots* in this wide world, she had wished most to see."

Here are some further examples :—

"The study of nature in her animal and vegetable kingdoms, although *of all others* the most obvious and simple, seems to be one of the last which attracted the attention of mankind."—Roscoe. *Life of Leo X.*

"A stain *of all others* the most readily made and the most difficult to expunge."—*Ibid.*

"They were of a country which, *of all others* in Europe, has been most familiar with war."—Sir Walter Scott. *Life of Napoleon.*

"But half his heart was in his profession, which, *of all others*, would require the whole."—Gilfillan. *Literary Portraits.*

"Astronomy, 'that star-eyed science,' which, *of all others*, most denotes the grandeur of our destiny."—*Ibid.*

The writer most addicted to this fault is Sir A. Alison, from whom I shall have occasion to quote several examples of it in the chapter on "Mannerism."

Among the many curious things that have been given to the world by the author of "Curiosities of Literature," those of his own unconscious making are not the least amusing. Of these I have already cited a few samples; and

I shall now adduce some further instances, which would make no inconsiderable addition to his chapter on "Literary Blunders."

"When relics of Saints were *first* introduced, the relic-mania *was* universal."—*Curiosities of Literature.*

That the relic-mania became universal "soon after" it was first introduced, is what the writer meant to say; not that its *first* introduction and its *universal* adoption were simultaneous, as he actually says.

"When a modern bishop was just advanced to a mitre."—*Ibid.*

As it is the mitre that makes the bishop, so it is the priest, and not the bishop, that is *advanced* to the mitre.

"I have seen an English ass once introduced on our stage, which did not act with this decorum. Our late *actors* have frequently been *beasts*—a Dutch taste."—*Ibid.*

From one part of this quotation the reader is led to believe that our late actors made beasts of themselves; but the inference from the context is that beasts were brought on the stage as actors.

"His successors now only made use of the 'sentences' as a row of pegs to *hang on* their fine-spun metaphysical questions."—*Ibid.*

Here is another of those phrases, so common in this writer, in which he says the contrary

of what he means. He means to say that the questions were to be hung on the "sentences" as on pegs; but he actually says that the pegs were to be hung on the questions. It should have been "on which to hang," instead of "to hang on."

"On this Abishai vaults on David's horse, and (with an Oriental metaphor) the land of the Philistines leaped to him instantly."—*Ibid.*

What description of metaphor that may be which could leap with the land of the Philistines, is only known to D'Israeli and the Orientals. It has not yet found a place in the European Republic of Letters. The writer probably meant to say "(to use an Oriental metaphor)."

In commenting on Bentley's readings of Milton, D'Israeli remarks:—

"Bentley's canons of criticism are apochryphal."—*Ibid.*

It is obvious that D'Israeli does not understand the meaning of "apochryphal." The canons to be apochryphal must have been propounded by another, and appropriated by Bentley. It is his readings of Milton that are apochryphal and not his canons. The canons, whether sound or unsound, are really and truly Bentley's canons; but the readings he proposes are not the true readings of Milton.

Speaking of the Latin verses, sentences and texts of Scripture, written by Prynne on his

chamber walls, during his imprisonment in the Tower of London, D'Israeli says :—

"Prynne literally verified Pope's description :—

"Is there who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
With desperate charcoal round his darken'd walls?"

The word "verified" is here meant for "anticipated." A verification of a thing must come after the thing itself. How could Prynne's scrawling on his prison walls, in 1632, *verify* a description that was not written by Pope till a hundred years after?

"There are three foul corrupters of a language: caprice, affectation, and ignorance. Such fashionable cant terms as 'Theatricals' and 'Musicals,' invented by the flippant Topham, still survive among his confraternity of frivolity."—*Ibid.*

In the next article D'Israeli, forgetting that he had described the word "theatricals" as a cant term, uses it in the following sentence :—

"These proverbs are dramas of a single act, invented by Carmontel, but who designed them only for private *theatricals*."—*Ibid.*

"The poems of Chatterton and Ossian are veiled in mystery."—*Ibid.*

The blunder here consists in the coupling of the names. The writer should have said :—"The poems of Rowley and Ossian," or "of Chatterton and Macpherson."

"It is curious to observe the various *substitutes* for paper *before* its discovery."—*Ibid.*

This sentence requires no comment. It yields not in absurdity to any "Bull," Irish, English, or Scotch, that I have ever met with.

"The *ancestors* of the human race knew poverty in a partial degree."—*Ibid.*

The human race began with Adam and Eve, and includes all their descendants. Who, then, were their *ancestors?* D'Israeli, of course, meant to speak of the primitive races of man, the early inhabitants of the earth; and he might have described them as "*our* ancestors," the "ancestors of the living generation;" but to say that they were the *ancestors* of the *human race* is to say that they were their *own* ancestors. This blunder is not, however, without a parallel. What D'Israeli says of the primitive members of the human family, Milton asserts, in a contrary sense, of Adam and Eve, with this difference, that D'Israeli's language implies an unconscious mistake, while that of Milton is a poetical license, designed to express one of the most beautiful images in the language:—

"So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair,
That ever since in love's embraces met;
Adam, the goodliest man of men since born,
His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve."

If we turn from D'Israeli's English blunders to his French "bévues," we shall find that he possessed but a very superficial knowledge of a

language, from the literary stores of which he has extracted by far the greater proportion of his "Curiosities" and "Anecdotes." In the article headed "Mysteries, Moralities," he quotes from the *Mystery of St. Denis*, and concludes with the following quatrain on the subject of baptism :—

"Sire, oyez que fait ce fol prêtre ;
Il prend de l'yaue en une escuele,
Et gete aux gens sur la cervele,
Et dit que *partant* sont sauvés."

Which he translates thus :—

"Sir, hear what this mad priest does ;
He takes water out of a ladle,
And throwing it at people's heads,
He says that, *when they depart*, they are saved."

The word "partant" in the original is an adverb, and means "thereupon," "forthwith." This D'Israeli has mistaken for "partant," the participle of "partir," and the nonsense of his translation would only prove that the priest was mad indeed.

From another of these religious farces, called *Sotties*, D'Israeli cites this couplet :—

"Tuer les gens pour leurs plaisirs,
Jouer le leur, l'autrui saisir."

Of which he gives the following translation :—

"Killing people for their pleasures ;
Minding their own interests, and seizing on what belongs to another."

Here we have "jouer le leur," to gamble, rendered by "to mind their own interests;" a rather equivocal method, it must be confessed, of accomplishing that object.

In another place, under the head of "Inquisition," we meet with the following passage :—

"Once all were Turks when they were not Romanists. Raymond, count of Toulouse, was constrained to submit. *The inhabitants were passed on the edge of the sword*, without distinction of age or sex."—*Ibid.*

D'Israeli must have translated this from some French writer; but being unacquainted with the idiomatic, though common, expression,—"passer un fil de l'épée," which means "to put to the sword," he gives us the words in their literal sense, which in English is no sense at all.

Farther on, speaking of the feudal custom of the French barons, known as the "droit de suzeraineté," in virtue of which they were permitted to cohabit with the new bride, during the first three nights after marriage, D'Israeli remarks :—

"Montesquieu is infinitely French when he could turn this shameful species of tyranny into a *bon-mot;* for he boldly observes on this :—'C'était bien ces trois nuits-là qu'il fallait choisir; car pour les autres on n'aurait pas donné beaucoup d'argent.' The legislator in the wit forgot the feelings of his heart."

It is inconceivable by what mental process D'Israeli could have tortured Montesquieu's

words into a *bon-mot*. Not only is there nothing of the kind in what he quotes, but there is not even an attempt at it. Montesquieu merely suggests a reason for the preference given to the first three nights; and in doing so he expresses the sentiments of the barons, and not his own. And yet, it is upon grounds like these that D'Israeli lays at the door of that illustrious man the silly imputation of being "infinitely French," and the grave and offensive charge of forgetting, for the sake of a *bon-mot*, the feelings of his heart!

These are among the very few instances in which D'Israeli, by quoting the original authorities, enables us to test the correctness of his translations; and if he be found inaccurate in these instances, what are we to think of his accuracy in the greater proportion of the *Curiosities*, where the original sources of information are kept out of view? But his blunders are not confined to his English or to his French. The materials with which he has manufactured some of his "Curiosities," are of the most fallacious character. I shall quote one instance which will abundantly bear me out in this assertion.

It is an article of the Roman Catholic faith, that the *Church*, as represented by the majority of its bishops in council, is infallible. Upon this point all sections of Catholics are agreed, it being as firmly adhered to by the Jansenists as

by the Jesuits, by the Ultramontanes as by their opponents. You cease to be a Roman Catholic the moment you cease to believe in this infallibility. But there is another species of infallibility with which, it is alleged, the Pope is endowed, and which has occasioned much controversy among the members of that persuasion. Some are of opinion that the Pope is infallible as a private teacher or expounder of the Christian doctrine; others, that his infallibility attaches only to such teachings as are delivered, so to speak, *ex cathedrâ;* and others, again, that he is not infallible, in any character or capacity whatsoever. The whole question, *as regards the Pope*, is matter of *opinion*. This opinion was rejected by the Church of France, under the guidance of the illustrious Bossuet, in 1688, and by the clergy of Ireland in 1825. It is an opinion which you may adopt or reject, without ceasing to be a Roman Catholic; and few, indeed, in these latter ages, are disposed to place much trust in the infallibility of any mere mortal man. With these facts and opinions D'Israeli was intimately acquainted. His frequent mention of the scholastic divines and their disputations, his allusions to the quarrels of the Ultramontanes, and his extensive researches among the dusty tomes of ecclesiastical history, are sufficient evidence of this circumstance. What, then, are we to think of a writer who could misrepresent

these matters, and, by confounding two distinct things, make it appear that the infallibility of the Pope is an established point of doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church? The passage in which this is done is as follows:—

"Concerning the acknowledged *infallibility of the Popes*, it appears that Gregory VII., in council, decreed that the Church of Rome *never had erred, and never should err.* It was thus this prerogative of his Holiness became received till 1313, when John XXII. abrogated decrees made by three Popes, his predecessors, and declared that what had been done *amiss* by one Pope or Council might be *corrected* by another; and Gregory XI., 1370, in his will, deprecates '*Si quid in Catholicâ fide errasset.*' The University of Vienna protested against it, calling it a contempt of God and an idolatry, if any one in matters of faith appealed from a *Council* to the *Pope*,—that is, from God, who presides in *Councils*, to man. But the *infallibility* was at length established by Leo X., especially after Luther's opposition, because they despaired of defending their indulgences, bulls, &c., by any other method."—*Curiosities of Literature.*

I have given the passage with D'Israeli's italics. In the first sentence he puts forth two gross misstatements. He pretends that the infallibility of the *Popes* is "acknowledged," which it is not, and never was; and he then erroneously asserts that a decree which establishes the infallibility of the *Church* establishes that of the *Popes*. He repeats this error in the third sentence, when he says that this prerogative of his Holiness became received in virtue of a certain decree; whereas that decree speaks only of the infallibility of the *Church*. The *Church*, therefore, and not any

individual *Pope*, being held infallible, there is no inconsistency in Pope Gregory XI. deprecating "Si quid in Catholicâ fide errasset," nor in the protest of the University of Vienna. Both, on the contrary, go to establish a distinction between the *Popes*—who, as men, are liable to error—and the *Church* of God, against which its Divine Founder promised that the gates of Hell should not prevail. "But," says D'Israeli, "the infallibility was at length established by Leo X." This is the crowning error of this most inaccurate paragraph. Leo X., whatever may have been his private *opinion*, established no such infallibility. He, or rather the Council of Trent, re-asserted the infallibility of the *Church;* and as to that of the *Pope*, every enlightened Roman Catholic is perfectly aware that it remains an *open* question to this day.

Although these notices relate chiefly to literary blunders, I cannot help citing an instance, that occurs to me, of a practical kind, especially as it has reference to two of the most remarkable literary characters of the last and present centuries. The reader will remember Dr. Johnson's definition of the word "pension."—"Pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country;" and how cleverly he was entrapped by George III. into accepting a pension for himself. For this inconsistency Johnson has been sneered at by different writers, and among others by Cobbett,

who, in his *English Grammar*, has this example in speaking of Johnson :—

"Myself, than whom few men have been found more base, having in my dictionary described a pensioner as a slave of state, and having afterwards myself become a pensioner."

Nevertheless, Cobbett, who could thus taunt Johnson with inconsistency and baseness, presents in his person the most remarkable instance on record of similar baseness and inconsistency. In the work from which I have just quoted he is continually railing at the House of Commons, and describing it as the "Thieves' House," "a Den of Thieves," and so forth: and yet, in the face of all this, he, some years afterwards, put himself forward as a candidate for admission into this thievish fraternity, and, with no little self-complacency and pride, actually took his place as one of its members. In all this we have nothing but a new version of the Fable of "the Fox and the Grapes." When Johnson compiled his *Dictionary* he had as little hope of ever becoming a favourite with the ministers of the Crown and a recipient of the Government bounty, as Cobbett had, at a subsequent period, of ever finding his way into the House of Commons. Each was the dupe of his own conceit; and each, after his fashion, thought he could show his independence by sneering at the object which he secretly coveted, but which he imagined to be beyond his reach.

Much of the blundering for which our prose writers are conspicuous, may be traced to their incautious adoption of foreign words and modes of expression. Among these there are few of more frequent occurrence than "sobriquet," commonly written "so*u*briquet," a word unknown to the French language; and "coûte que coûte," which invariably figures in the meaningless form of "coûte *qui* coûte," or "coûte *qu'il* coûte."

Every day we meet with the expression "a sous," the persons who employ it not being aware that the final *s* makes a plural of the word "sou." The use of "a sous," by Englishmen, is analogous to that of "un pence," so common among Frenchmen in those countries where the British currency is established.

An instance of this kind occurs in Chenevix. Speaking of the misapplication of epithets or surnames to the kings of France, he says:

"Some of the former kings were indeed misnamed, as Philip the *August*, who showed himself so petty in his conduct towards Richard of England."—*Essay on National Character.*

The error here arises from the supposed analogy between "Philippe Auguste," and such appellations as "Charles *le* Téméraire" and "Philippe *le* Bel," which has led the writer to mistake a proper name for a *sobriquet.* But the presence of the article *le* makes all the difference. The latter names are correctly translated "Charles the Bold," "Philip the

Fair;" while "Philippe Auguste" must be rendered by "Philip Augustus." To warrant the expression "Philip the August," the original should be "Philippe l'Auguste."

Chenevix is not the only English writer in whom this blunder occurs.

I think I have seen it stated somewhere that the author of the "Letters of Junius" was acquainted with the French language. If he was, the acquaintance must have been exceedingly slight, as the following passage in one of the "Letters" would seem to indicate:—

"Lewis the Fourteenth *had reason* when he said, 'the Pyrenees are removed.'"

The use of the expression "had reason," by so idiomatic a writer as Junius, can only be accounted for on the supposition that he had met with some remark in French to this effect: "Louis Quatorze avait raison quand il a dit qu'il n'y a plus de Pyrénées;" and that, wishing to translate it into English, he rendered the words, "avait raison," in their literal sense, without being aware that the correct English of them is, "was right."

"Louis Quatorze *was right* when he said, 'the Pyrenees are removed.'"

Another example is furnished us by no less a personage than the late Duke of Newcastle. Writing to the "Standard" newspaper in March,

1845, his Grace concludes his letter with the words :—

"J'ai tout perdu *que* mon honneur."

This is adopted from that remarkable saying of Francis the First, after the battle of Pavia: "Tout est perdu hormis l'honneur." The Duke was not particular as to the exact words, and he merely wished to express the same sentiment in good French. But see what he has made of it: "I have lost all *that* my honour." The word *que* sometimes expresses the English *but*, as in the phrase, "Je n'ai perdu que mon honneur," and that is what misled the Duke; but it never does so, unless when preceded by some negative particle, and that is what his Grace was probably not aware of.

An instance of this sort of blunder occurs in Mrs. Sigourney's "Pleasant Memories of Pleasant Lands." She is speaking of the discontent that prevailed in Paris in 1840, and remarks :—

"Here and there cries were heard among the crowd, of 'À bas les traiteurs!'"

There certainly is no lack of *traiteurs* in the good city of Paris: they are almost as numerous there as *traîtres;* but it is to be presumed that, on the occasion in question, the public exasperation was directed against the latter, and not against the unoffending "traiteurs."

Here is a sample from Sir Bulwer Lytton :—

"A foreign writer has justly observed that we may judge of the moral influence of this country by the simple phrase, that a man is worth so much, or, as he translates the expression, 'digne tant.'"—*England and the English.*

I apprehend that the translator here is no other than Sir Bulwer Lytton himself, inasmuch as no French writer, who understood the English words, would have used such an expression as "digne tant," which means "worthy so much," and not "worth so much." The French of the latter is "vaut tant."

There is no word in the French language that requires such cautious handling from a foreigner as the word "esprit." It is as versatile and multifarious as the people whose mental characteristic it so aptly represents; and in proportion to its versatility is the ill-usage to which it is daily subjected by English writers of every degree. One of the numerous meanings of this word occurs in the phrase "esprit de corps," frequently written "esprit *du* corps;" which, if it means anything, means "the spirit of the body." Lord Byron, in a letter to Moore, after using the French expression, asks with characteristic indifference: "Is it *du* or *de*, for that is more than I know?"

A ludicrous application of the word "esprit" occurs in the following sentence in the "Dublin

University Magazine" for September, 1844, in a review of Carleton's "Traits and Stories:"—

"Her features are by no means regular; she dances with much more *esprit* than elegance."

The writer no doubt meant to describe the lady as dancing with liveliness, vivacity, animation, and he might have clearly expressed his idea by either of those terms. Instead of which he resorts to a foreign expression, and tells us that the lady had her wit in her heels; for, to dance with *esprit* has no other meaning.

Macaulay, in his "Essay on the Athenian Orators," condescends to repeat a pretended *jeu-de-mots* on the title of Montesquieu's great work:—

"It was happily said that Montesquieu ought to have changed the name of his book from 'L'Esprit des Lois' to 'L'Esprit sur les Lois.'"

I believe it could be shown by numerous instances that the temptation of punning has been a stumbling-block to many men of the greatest genius. For them, no less than for the inferior aspirant to literary distinction, a quibble has its attractions; and some have been so far led astray by the false glitter, as to forfeit their reputation for sagacity and wisdom. The excess to which Shakspeare has indulged in this species of trifling is perhaps the greatest blemish in his works. It gives an air of conceit to some of Bacon's finest thoughts; and here we have that admirable

writer, Macaulay, quoting one of its vilest samples, and, what is worse, characterizing it as a "happy saying." In point of fact, what is the meaning of "L'Esprit sur les Lois?" Did it ever occur to the person who proposed it as an appropriate title for Montesquieu's work, or to Macaulay, who echoes the suggestion, that this happy saying is sheer nonsense?

One of the meanings of "esprit" is "ingeniousness;" and it is probably in that sense that Macaulay would have us understand it in "L'Esprit sur les Lois." But he forgets that it ceases to have that signification the moment the article *le* is prefixed to it. In the title of Montesquieu's work, the words "l'esprit" are employed in the sense of "the scope," the "guiding principle," "the fundamental idea;" and the substitution of "sur les" for "des" would not affect the meaning of "esprit." The change would only be from one preposition to another, with this material difference, that, while "l'esprit des lois" is perfectly intelligible, "l'esprit sur les lois" has no meaning at all. True, by placing the preposition *de* before the article, we come across the meaning which is akin to ingeniousness or wit. "De l'esprit sur les lois," however absurd as the title of a book, would be intelligible as part of a sentence. Thus we might say, "Montesquieu a fait de l'esprit sur les lois—en traitant des lois;" but no one,

with the slightest notion of French, would propose as a title for any possible book, a mode of speech so utterly meaningless as "L'Esprit sur les Lois."

There are two other expressions in French which require to be carefully discriminated by foreign writers; namely, "arrêt" and "arrêté." The former is applied to the judgments or decisions of a court of justice, and is, strictly speaking, a legal term. The latter is employed to express the decrees or orders emanating from legislative or police authorities, and belongs to political phraseology. It is impossible to read three French state-papers without noticing this distinction; and yet, Sir A. Alison, who must have perused almost every document connected with the great revolution, confounds these terms throughout his "History of Europe." He talks of "the *arrêt* of the First Consul;" "the *arrêt* establishing arms of honour;" "the *arrêt* for Fouché's dismissal," &c.; and by that term, instead of "*arrêté*," he commonly describes the orders and regulations of the French Council of State and other political bodies.

The same writer, speaking of the reception of the Allied Sovereigns in Paris in 1814, says:—

"The enthusiasm of the multitude knew no bounds. Cries of 'Vive l'Empereur Alexandre!' 'Vive le Roi de Prusse!' 'Vivent les Alliés!' 'Vivent *notres* Libérateurs!' burst from all sides."—*History of Europe.*

Sir A. Alison knows enough of French to be aware that "our deliverer" may be translated into that language, "notre libérateur;" and he fancies that, to put the same words in the plural, he has only to add an *s* to each; forgetting that the correct plural of "notre" is "nos."

Farther on we meet with another sample:—

"Turning to Bertrand he said, 'Tout à présent est fini! sauvons nous.'"

Which Alison translates thus:—

"'All is now over, let us *save* ourselves.'"

The literal meaning of "sauver" is "to save," but it also signifies "to run away"—"to escape;" and it was in the latter sense that Napoleon employed it, when he addressed the above words to Bertrand after the battle of Waterloo. The correct English of the phrase is: "All is now over; let us be off."

So long as this blundering is confined to mere verbal inaccuracy, it is harmless enough; but it sometimes goes the length of perverting historical truth, and then it becomes peculiarly offensive. The following passage in the same writer is an instance in point. He is describing the effervescence caused in Paris by the flight of Louis XVI. and the royal family, in June 1791, and continues thus:—

"Marat announced in his Journal that a general insurrection was indispensable; in a few days the sanguinary monarch would return at the head of a numerous army and a hundred guns, to

destroy the city by red-hot shot; and Freron thundered in the 'Orateur du Peuple' against the infamous queen, who united the profligacy of Messalina to the bloodthirstiness of the Medici."

When we speak of the "Medici" as a family, we allude to the great characters who have rendered that name illustrious; such as Cosmo, Lorenzo the Magnificent, Leo X., &c. With the wisdom and virtues by which they were distinguished, we are all familiarly acquainted through the able writings of Roscoe; but, until Sir A. Alison published his "History of Europe," no one had ever heard of their *bloodthirstiness!* Fortunately, however, for their fame, the historian has given in a foot-note the words of Freron, from which I find that the allusion is not to the Medici, as a family, but to one person who bore that name, viz. Catherine de' Medici (or, as the French write it, Medicis), the mother of Charles IX., and the instigator of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Freron's words are:—

"Il est parti ce roi imbécile, ce roi parjure, cette reine scélérate qui réunit la lubricité de Messaline à la soif du sang qui dévorait Medicis. Femme exécrable, Furie de la France, c'est toi qui étais l'âme du complot."—Freron. *L'Orateur du Peuple*, No. 46.

It is inconceivable to what extent the facts of history are perverted or misstated through the ignorance of translators. If Freron had wished to speak of *the* Medici, he would have said "*les* Medicis;" but by using the expression *Medicis*,

he showed that he spoke of only *one* person of the name; and that person Sir A. Alison should have searched for among his historical recollections, before he affixed to the whole race the brand of proverbial bloodthirstiness.

This misquotation and mistranslation of foreign words and idioms are not confined to the living languages: the Latin also comes in for a share of them. Southey, in one of his *Letters*, speaking of the gap which might be found in his posthumous works, has these words:—

"I have planned more poems and more histories; so that, whenever I am removed to another state of existence, there will be some *valde lacrymabile hiatus* in some of my posthumous works."—*Life and Correspondence.*

In this passage Southey not only misquotes the Latin words, a not very creditable thing for one who is perpetually harping on his retentive memory; but in doing so he gives us a glaring sample of ungrammatical Latinity—a proceeding which speaks but little for his boasted classical attainments. It is obvious that, in the above quotation, he had in his eye Virgil's well-known *hiatus valde deflendus;* but his memory failing him as to the exact words, he supplies the loss by coupling an adjective of the neuter gender with a noun of the masculine.

Mrs. Sigourney's Latin is on a par with her French. Alluding to the equestrian statue of the Porte St. Denis, she says, "The only inscrip-

tion upon it is 'Ludovico Magno;'" and then she adds with reference to Versailles:—

"Here 'Ludovico Magno,' as he was fond of being styled, is multiplied by the pencil in the most imposing forms."

These quotations from foreign languages are dangerous things in the hands of the uninitiated. For one instance in which the writer shows his dexterity in using them, hundreds might be quoted in which he has nothing to show but the folly of one who has been playing with edged tools. It is plain that Mrs. Sigourney was not aware that "Ludovico Magno" means "*To* Louis the Great." Otherwise, instead of the barbarism, "Ludovico Magno is multipled," she would have said: "Ludovicus Magnus is multiplied."

From Mrs. Sigourney I shall pass to her illustrious countryman, Benjamin Franklin. He says in one of his letters:—

"We had been shown numberless skeletons of a kind of little fly called *an* ephemer*ae*."

And farther on he adds:—

"But what will fame be to *an* ephemer*ae* who no longer exists?"

Had Franklin said that he had been shown the skeleton of *an asses*, or that *an asses* no longer exists, he would not have uttered a more glaring absurdity. And yet this great philosopher, who could not distinguish the singular from the plural in Latin, had the courage and the patriotism,

when speaking of his "dear country," to exclaim in that language: "Esto perpetua!"

Hallam, in his "Constitutional History of England," under date of 1687, mentions an address from the benchers of the Middle Temple to James II., in which he makes them say that they are resolved to defend with their lives and fortunes the divine maxim, *à Deo rex, à lege rex.*

The benchers of the Middle Temple, in 1687, were the strenuous assertors of prerogative, holding the opinion that, as the kingly office derives its authority from God, so the law derives its authority from the king. Their favourite maxim was *à Deo rex, à rege lex*, the reverse of which expresses the political creed of those who think that the kingly office derives its authority *both* from God and from the law. To understand how Hallam put one maxim instead of the other in the mouth of the benchers, we must suppose him to have been weighing the merits of the more liberal sentiment, and while in this mood to have let it slip from his pen in that form. The odd thing is that he should have preserved it in this preposterous form (preposterous as regards the party to whom it is ascribed) through *three* editions of his work.

Sir Bulwer Lytton has the following:—

"The Charter-House, Winchester, King's College, were all founded pro 'pauperes et indigentes scholares,' for poor and indigent scholars."—*England and the English.*

At first I was disposed to take the Latin words for a *bonâ fide* quotation; but the palpable blunder of the accusative case after the preposition "pro," precluded such a supposition. Sir Bulwer is descanting on the condition of the English universities; and he must have intended this gibberish as a sample of the "little Latin," which he says is acquired in our public schools.

Sir A. Alison, in two places, employs the word "phantasmagoria" as a plural:—

"He has not confined himself to English story, strikingly as its moving *phantasmagoria come* forth from his magic hand."—*Essay on the Historical Romance.*

"Ainsworth, whose talents for description and the drawing of the horrible have led him to make his novels often little more than pictorial *phantasmagoria*."—*Ibid.*

The following are from Jerdan's "Autobiography:"

"Henry Erskine and Lady Wallace, and all the racy jests of their gay pastime, are as if they never had been: *Sic transit facetiæ mundi.*"

Surely, Mr. Jerdan, whose reminiscences are so vivid upon other points, cannot have forgotten his Latin to the extent here displayed. If he bore in mind that there is such a phrase as *Sic transit gloria mundi*, he should have remembered that a parody of it, with the substitution of the plural "facetiæ" for the singular "gloria," is alike opposed to grammar and sense, unless a corresponding change be made in the verb *transit*.

"Her contributions to the *Literary Gazette* were a grateful reward; but I may, I am sure, dip, without offence, into less public *litera scripta*, to show how much the office of kindly, yet impartial, criticism is valued by the most deserving.

"Of the other luminary I have named, I have not so much to say, in consequence of such *litera scripta* of his as *have* escaped my confusion and destruction of MSS. being marked 'private.'"

In these sentences the writer uses the noun singular, *litera*, as a plural. According to him, therefore, the correct singular is *literum!* But the recollection of the proverb, "Litera scripta *manet*," should have opened his eyes to this absurdity. And yet here is a gentleman who has presided over the province of criticism for a quarter of a century, and who boasts of having conferred distinction and fame upon most of the writers that have adorned our literature during that period.

Looking at the numerous blunders, both in English and French, which have been cited from Isaac D'Israeli, the reader will not be surprised to learn that Latin and Greek come in for a share of ill-usage at his hands. Indeed, it is a question with me whether he possessed any knowledge whatsoever of those languages. He quotes from them occasionally, as any one may do who will be at the trouble of copying; but when he has to deal with expressions adopted or derived from them, the manner in which he couples with such expressions adjectives of the same import, plainly

shows that he is unacquainted with their meaning or derivation. A few short examples will illustrate this :—

"These appear *trifling minutiæ*."—*Curiosities of Literature.*

"He explained to her the *mysteries* of the *arcana* of alchymy."—*Ibid.*

"These *battles* of logo*machy*, in which so much ink has been spilt."—*Quarrels of Authors.*

The writer who penned such sentences could not be aware that "minutiæ" is a Latin word, and means "trifles;" that "arcana" is in the same category, and means "secrets," "mysteries;" and that "logomachy" is derived from the Greek, and includes in its signification, "to battle," or "to dispute."

If we are surprised to meet, in D'Israeli, with an expression so palpably tautological as "trifling minutiæ," what are we to think of a writer of the ability and ripe scholarship of Archbishop Whately, who has the same fault in the following sentence :—

"Some writers have confined their attention to *trifling minutiæ* of style."—*Introduction to Rhetoric.*

And if we smile at D'Israeli and his "battles of logomachy," can we do otherwise than laugh outright at Sir A. Alison, who, in his "History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon," talks of representative institutions as having been "re-established in our time by the influence of *English Anglomania!*"

MANNERISM.

"Le style c'est l'homme."

BUFFON.

MANNERISM.

In the foregoing chapters I have pointed out some of the defects that seem worthy of notice in our prose writings. It will be seen that, far from improving the art of composition, in proportion to our learning and enlightenment, we have in many respects degraded it from its proper dignity and importance. And not only is the language, as written and spoken, a different language from what it should be: each trade, each profession, each association, each quackery, has a language and style of composition peculiar to itself. There is the mob-orator style invented by O'Connell; the knock-down style by Robins; the washy style by Rowland; the unctuous style by Holloway; the glossy style by Day and Martin; and the patchwork style by Moses and Son. There is, moreover, the naval style, the military style, the theatrical style, the Cockney style, the snob style, and the penny-a-line style. The intelligent reader is sufficiently acquainted with the Protean forms

in which our excellent mother-tongue delights to disguise herself, and it is unnecessary to quote examples.

But perhaps the most characteristic style of all is the tally-ho, or Nimrodian style. This method of composition consists in starting some fresh idea at the beginning of every paragraph; in losing sight of it as soon as it is started; and in pursuing in its stead the first stray conceit that turns up. During the chase the reader gets occasional glimpses of the particular notion with which the writer set out. He sometimes even fancies that he is once more on its track, and on the point of coming up with it. But he soon discovers his error; for now it appears that the writer had mistaken one idea for another, and had lost sight of the old in his pursuit of the new. At times the reader is hurried on in a straight line. At others he is dragged through apparently interminable windings, and finds himself, at the winding up, on the exact spot whence he had taken his departure. The great beauty of this style consists in jumbling in one sentence every form and figure of speech. The longer the sentence, the more rugged its construction, the more intricate its involutions, the more gaps it presents in the way of dashes, the more barriers it opposes in the way of parentheses, the more fences it shows in compound epithets; the more pleasurable will be the reader's excitement, and the

keener his appreciation of the author's dexterity and skill.

The greatest adept in the tally-ho style, if not its inventor, is the famous Christopher North. Once he gets into his jacket, nothing will get him out of it until he has led his reader through one of his favourite "Recreations." Some of his sentences are a page and a half long, and so intricate withal, that the reader often sinks exhausted from lack of breath. This method of composition is to be found at almost every page of the "Recreations." I cannot, however, refrain from quoting the following sample, which is presented to the reader at the commencement of the first "Fytte," as if to give him a foretaste of the rare sport that is in store for him.

"All such pastimes, whether followed merely as pastimes or as professions, or as the immediate means of sustaining life, require sense, sagacity, and knowledge of Nature and Nature's laws; nor less, patience, perseverance, courage even, and bodily strength or activity, while the spirit which animates and supports them is a spirit of anxiety, doubt, fear, hope, joy, exultation, and triumph—in the heart of the young a fierce passion —in the heart of the old a passion still, but subdued and tamed down, without, however, being much dulled or deadened by various experience of all the mysteries of the calling, and by the gradual subsiding of all impetuous impulses in the frames of all mortal men beyond perhaps threescore, when the blackest head will be becoming grey, the most nervous knee less firmly knit, the most steely-springed instep less elastic, the keenest eye less of a far-keeker, and, above all, the most boiling heart less of a cauldron or a crater—yea, the whole man subject to some dimness or decay, and, consequently, the whole duty of

man, like the new edition of a book, from which many passages, that formed the chief glory of the *editio princeps*, have been expunged—the whole character of the style corrected without being thereby improved—just like the later editions of the 'Pleasures of Imagination,' which were written by Akenside when he was about twenty-one, and altered by him at forty—to the exclusion or destruction of many most *splendida vitia*, by which process the poem, in our humble opinion, was shorn of its brightest beams, and suffered disastrous twilight and eclipse—perplexing critics."

Here is a sentence of thirty lines, beginning with "pastimes" and ending with "poems," in which upwards of one hundred ideas are thrown together in one mess of crudity and confusion; congenial food, I have no doubt, for your true sportsman, but somewhat too massive and multifarious for the digestive organs of ordinary mortals. In regard, however, to mere length, Wilson and all other writers are surpassed by Hazlitt, who, in his notice of Coleridge, has contrived to spin out a single sentence to *one hundred and ten lines!* It contains the word "and" ninety-seven times, with only one semicolon, and is probably the longest sentence in any author, ancient or modern.

In an inscription to the memory of the late Lord George Bentinck, I have discovered a style of composition of an entirely novel character. The inscription was thus put forth in the public prints:—

"*Bentinck Testimonial.*—The Committee connected with

the Notts Testimonial to the late Lord George Bentinck, have at length decided upon the following inscription :—

"To the memory of Lord George Frederick Cavendish Bentinck, second surviving son of William Henry Cavendish Scott, fourth duke of Portland, &c., *whose* ardent patriotism and uncompromising honesty were only equalled by the persevering zeal and extraordinary talents, *which* called forth the grateful homage of those *who*, in erecting this memorial, pay a heartfelt tribute to exertions *which* prematurely brought to the grave one *who* might long have lived the pride of his native country."

This is a style unknown to any system of rhetoric, ancient or modern. It is peculiar to the nineteenth century, and may, not inappropriately, be called the *railway* style. It is alike remarkable for the rapidity of its transitions from thought to thought, and for the length of theme the writer may go over without drawing breath. It has no time for colons or semicolons, and bestows but a passing notice on the commas. As to full stops, it admits of only one, and that it calls a *terminus*. Stops were well enough in the steady, stately, stage-coach phraseology of the Johnsons, but they are unsuited to our days of electricity and steam. Towards the construction of the above "Inscription," it is to be presumed that, as each member of the committee supplied his quota of the funds, so he furnished his share of the phrase, the different verbal contributions being afterwards strung together by means of "who's" and "which's." One member suggested his lordship's "ardent patriotism;" a

second his "uncompromising honesty;" a third his "persevering zeal;" a fourth his "extraordinary talents;" a fifth the committee's "grateful homage;" a sixth "their heart-felt tribute;" a seventh his lordship's "exertions;" and an eighth, "the pride of his country brought to a premature grave." The great advantage of this style consists in the facility with which the sentence may be spun out to any length, without the slightest effort of memory or understanding, each "who" and "which" suggesting a new thought, conjuring up a fresh idea to the mind's eye, and serving as a cue to what should follow. Had the Notts committee been so advised, they might have continued the inscription thus:—

"The pride of his native country, *which* has been sacrificed by the policy of Lord John Russell, *who* carried the repeal of the Corn Laws, *which* has proved so injurious to the agriculturists, *who* are brought to the verge of ruin by the modern doctrines of free trade, *which* is daily becoming more popular with our statesmen, *who* are leagued with the Continental democrats for the annihilation of British commerce, *which* is the pride and boast of our country."

Style, however, must not be confounded with "mannerism." Every writer has a style of his own, a mode of expressing his thoughts peculiar to himself. Style in this sense is as various as the bodily or the mental characteristics of the

writers. Mannerism, on the other hand, consists in some marked peculiarity in the method of composition; being in regard to style what deformity is in regard to the human features. This peculiarity assumes different forms with different writers. With some it is mere affectation: with others, and by far the greater number, it is quite involuntary, and is as difficult to lay aside, as it is easy to take up. One writer exhibits it in the copious use of foreign words; another in the unnecessary use of parentheses; a third in a startling method of punctuation; a fourth in the repetition of certain words in close juxtaposition; a fifth in the adoption of strange titles for his works. Having already spoken of the use and abuse of foreign words, I shall now proceed to lay before the reader some samples of the other kinds of mannerism.

Nothing affords a clearer demonstration of the incapacity of an author to embody his thoughts in intelligible language than the frequent use of the parenthesis. In an able writer it is often the effect of negligence; in a mediocre one it may be reckoned the consequence of mediocrity; and if in the correctest composition it is sometimes unavoidable, it must be admitted that there are few sentences, in which it occurs, that might not be improved either by its omission altogether, or by a judicious transposition of some of the members of the sentence. The prose writers most

free from this blemish are Gibbon, Hallam, and Macaulay. The one most tainted by it is Charles Lamb. And after all, one half of Lamb's parentheses are only so in form. Substitute commas and semicolons, and you will not find the slightest alteration in the sense. No doubt, real, unmistakable parentheses abound, but they are part of his style; a species of mannerism, characteristic of his lighter compositions. He throws them in upon all occasions; gives them the most fantastic shapes; plays with them; tosses them about; and yet, all the while, the sense is clear, and, in so far as parentheses are concerned, perfectly intelligible. Lamb uses a parenthesis as the author of "Don Juan" does a digression. Indeed, Byron's digressions are nothing but long parentheses, in which he contrives, as it were by accident, to introduce some of his wittiest and wisest sayings.

A parenthesis is to literary composition what a police-officer is to the composition of society. Where there is much disorganization, the constable's staff is often raised to separate conflicting parties, and maintain order and decorum among the several members of the community. Where the intellectual constitution is defective, the parenthesis is frequently in requisition to marshal the jostling ideas, and prevent them from falling foul of each other in their struggles for utterance. The social body that stands least

in need of the one, and the mental organization that seldomest requires the other, are those which have made the greatest advances towards perfection.

Some parentheses are merely useless, being the result of ignorance or carelessness in the writer. Take for example the following from Sir B. Lytton :—

"Yet, I believe, on the whole, it would be an aristocracy very much resembling the present one (only without the control which the king's prerogative at present affords him)." —*England and the English.*

A comma here, after the word "one," is all that was required; instead of which we have a parenthesis, with no other effect than that of shutting out the concluding part of the sentence, which does not require to be separated from that which precedes it.

In another part of the same work Sir Bulwer has this example :—

"Our ancestors founded certain great schools (that now rear the nobles, the gentry, and the merchants) for the benefit of the poor."

Here is a short sentence of only two lines, but put together in such a manner that a parenthesis is resorted to, lest it should be inferred, contrary to the writer's intention, that the nobles, the gentry, and the merchants, are reared for the benefit of the poor; whereas, if each part of the sentence had been set down in its natural order,

the necessity of a parenthesis for the eye, and of a change of tone for the ear, would have been obviated. The sentence should stand thus :—

"Our ancestors founded, for the benefit of the poor, certain great schools, that now rear the nobles, the gentry, and the merchants."

Another objectionable form of this figure is where one parenthesis is made to include another. Sir Bulwer Lytton shall again afford an illustration :—

"If it be true that the negligent or evil example of the aristocracy be thus powerfully pernicious, (not, we will acknowledge, from a design on their part, but (we will take the mildest supposition) from a want of attention—from a want of being thoroughly aroused to the nature and extent of their own influence) if this be true, how necessary have been the expositions of this work!"—*England and the English.*

But the worst species of parenthesis is that which to its native deformity adds the blemish of false grammar or distorted sense. Here is an instance from Sir A. Alison—the dash being used instead of the ordinary mark :—

"This wise and humane act was accompanied by one commuting the punishment of death pronounced against Victor Boirier and François Meunier—who had been convicted of an attempt on the king's life by firing into his carriage, though happily without effect, as he was going in state to the Legislative Body, on the first day of the session, accompanied by his two sons—into ten years' banishment."—*History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon.*

This parenthesis sins by its great length. Before it is closed, the reader has already lost

sight of the first part of the sentence, and is led to the conclusion that Louis Philippe was accompanied by his two sons, into ten years' banishment. And yet, to make the whole perfectly intelligible, without the aid of any parenthesis, all the writer had to do was to insert the words, "into ten years' banishment," after the word "commuting," thus:—

"This wise and humane act was accompanied by one commuting, into ten years' banishment, the punishment of death pronounced against Victor Boirier and François Meunier," &c.

Under this description of parenthesis may be classed the following from Mrs. Foster's "Hand-Book of European Literature:"—

"Hume's 'Natural Religion' called forth Dr. Beattie's (author of the 'Minstrel') able work."

And Bishop Thirlwall, in his reply to Bishop Hall, presents us with another instance:—

"I can confirm the accuracy of Mr. Evans's (the rural dean) statements with regard to the churches."

Of faults of style, this is one of the most offensive to the ear. Besides the jingle occasioned at the opening of the parenthesis, by bringing together the words, "Beattie's (author"—"Evans's (the rural dean;" and, at the closing, "Minstrel) able work"—"Dean) statements," we have the obvious inaccuracy of making a noun in the possessive case correspond to another noun

which is not in the same case. Thus, in the first example, "author" corresponds to "Beattie's," —that is, to something belonging to Dr. Beattie, instead of Dr. Beattie himself.

I am aware that Lindley Murray countenances, to some extent, this inaccuracy, where he approves, as correct, such phrases as the following:—

"These psalms are *David's, the king,* priest, and prophet of the Jewish people."

But his mistake arises from supposing that there is no alternative between the adoption of that form of phrase and the placing of the possessive case at the end of the sentence, thus:—

"These psalms are David, the king, priest, and prophet of the Jewish *people's.*"

Had that able grammarian examined the question with his usual discrimination, he would have seen that, in order to avoid the impropriety of the latter phrase, it is not necessary to resort to the still greater impropriety of making the possessive "David's" agree with the objective "king," as in the first example. He would have discovered, in the following, a better form than either, and one which is in every way unexceptionable:—

"These psalms are those of David, the king, priest, and prophet of the Jewish people."

Butler has an amusing example of this sort of

parenthesis, written, no doubt, in derision of all such forms of it :—

> " That proud dame for whom his soul
> Was burnt in 's belly like a coal,
> Used him so like a base rascallion,
> That old *Pyg* (what d' y' call him) *malion*,
> That cut his mistress out of stone,
> Had not so hard a hearted one."

Sometimes the parenthesis includes more than the writer intended, or the sense will admit; so that, if what is included were omitted, the sense would be incomplete. An instance occurs in Latham's " English Language :"—

" In Ben Jonson's ' Tale of a Tub,' one (and more than one of the characters) speaks thus."

This parenthesis should have been formed as follows :—

" In Ben Jonson's ' Tale of a Tub,' one (and more than one) of the characters speaks thus."

Another instance occurs in Darley's " Greek Drama :"—

" In the ' Iphigenia,' Orestes, after having discovered his sister, discovers himself to her. She, indeed, is discovered by the latter; but Orestes by (verbal proofs :) and these are such as the poet chooses to make him produce."

It is not easy to conceive for what purpose the parenthesis is here introduced: its presence is contrary to all the known rules of composition.

Dr. Whately, in his treatise on " Logic," containing one hundred and seven pages, has no

fewer than four hundred parentheses, three-fourths of which seem to be introduced for no other purpose than to perplex the reader by violating the ordinary principles of punctuation. For a logician, this method of proceeding is, to say the least of it, very illogical. Doubtless, in a work of that character, the parenthesis is often unavoidable; but what, may we ask, can be the use of it in such sentences as the following?—

"The supposed argument may be reduced (without any alteration of its meaning) into the syllogistic form."

"An infinitive (though it often comes last in the sentence) is never the predicate."

"Generalisation (as has been remarked) implies abstraction."

"The distribution of the predicate depends (not on the quantity, but) on the quality of the proposition."

"That premiss (wherever placed) is the major which contains the major term."

"If it were true, the consequent (which is granted to be false) would be true also."

"In these two examples (as well as very many others) it is implied."

"Any two circumstances (not naturally connected) are more rarely to be met with."

"The induction (in this last sense) has been sufficiently ample."

"The truth, (such as it is) of such propositions, is necessary and eternal."

In these sentences a comma would have satisfied all the requirements of punctuation;

while the more the character of the work imposed upon the writer the frequent introduction of the parenthesis, the more sparing he should have been of its use when it was wholly unnecessary.

As none but a careless or inaccurate writer will make use of a parenthesis where it may be avoided, so none but a writer of that character will omit it where the sense absolutely requires it. The following sentence is an example of such improper omission :—

"Almost all these castles have their legends or romantic incidents, *many of them connected with the Holy Wars*, which are fondly dwelt on by the inhabitants."—ALISON. *History of Europe.*

Here the words in italics should form a parenthesis, in order to make the reader understand that what the inhabitants fondly dwelt upon were the legends or romantic incidents, and not the Holy Wars.

The method of punctuation which consists in "dashes" is quite a modern invention. It was first used in the sentimental poetry that came into vogue in the beginning of the nineteenth century; and thence it passed into the sentimental novels by which that poetry has been supplanted. It is a species of punctuation peculiarly suited to the delineation of the mock-heroic; of that kind of intellectual abortion which we call "bathos," and which the French appro-

priately style "la morgue de la littérature."* No author who values his reputation will consent to have his works disfigured by this affectation; and one is therefore surprised and shocked to see it adopted by writers of such ability as Sir Bulwer Lytton, Charles Lamb, John Wilson, and Thomas Carlyle. A single specimen will be sufficient to convince the reader of the absurdity of this system of punctuation; and that specimen I shall take from Sir B. Lytton. The writer is describing the causes of the prevalence of suicide in England, and he sums up in these words :—

"The loss of fortune is the general cause of the voluntary loss of life. Wounded pride,—disappointment,—the schemes of an existence laid in the dust,—the insulting pity of friends,—the humbled despair of all our dearest connexions, for whom perhaps we toiled and wrought,—the height from which we have fallen,—the impossibility of regaining what we have lost,—the searching curiosity of the public,—the petty annoyance added to the great woe,—all rushing upon a man's mind in the sudden convulsion and turbulence of its elements, what wonder that he welcomes the only escape from the abyss into which he has been hurled."—*England and the English.*

Here we have a double punctuation; the one ordinary and formed by the comma, such as

* The reader is requested not to confound "la morgue de la littérature" with "la morgue littéraire." The former means "the sink of literature;" the latter "the surliness and pride of the man of letters."

Macaulay or any other great writer would be content to use; the other extraordinary and indicated by the significant —, such as is resorted to by writers who would have us believe that their words carry with them some uncommon import. It is as if the writer said to the reader: "Perhaps you fancy you are reading some commonplace composition, to be glanced at and thrown aside like the run of modern books; but you are mistaken. Here each word claims a peculiar emphasis; and to facilitate the weighing and leisurely digesting of our ideas, we have separated each member of the sentence by its proper dash." Of itself this species of punctuation is silly enough; but it ceases to be merely silly, when, as in the instance before us, it gives significance and weight to that frightfullest of all unchristian doctrines, namely, that, in certain circumstances, a man may "welcome suicide" as the only escape from the abyss into which he may have been hurled by the loss of his fortune: in other words, that the abyss created by a temporary loss is more to be avoided than that darkest and deepest of all abysses, into which a man hurls himself by the damning deed of self-destruction.

The mannerism which consists in the repetition of certain words may be appropriately classed under the peculiar expressions by which it is characterized; such as *However*, *Of all others*, *But*, *If*, and so forth. The following samples of

the *However* style are from Alison's "History of Europe during the French Revolution:"—

"Augereau was soon, *however*, dismissed the corps for a serious offence, and returned to Paris, penniless and in disgrace. There, *however*, his lofty stature and military air again attracted the attention of the recruiting sergeants, and he was enrolled in the regiment of Carabineers, commanded by the Marquis Poyanna. There, *however*, his mischievous disposition a second time broke out, and he was expelled from his new corps for carrying off his captain's horses to sell them in Switzerland."

"The Grand Vizier, *however*, alarmed for a fortress of such importance, at length recrossed the Danube and detached fifteen thousand men to beat up the enemy's quarters in its vicinity, in the end of October. Bagrathion advanced against this body, and an action, with no decisive results, ensued at Tartaritza, in which, *however*, it soon appeared that the Russians had been worsted; for Bagrathion immediately recrossed the Danube, and raised the blockade. Ismael, *however*, which had been long blockaded, surrendered on the 21st September."

Among the "blunders" which I have had occasion to notice in the preceding chapter, is the expression "Of all others." Of rare occurrence in the generality of writers, and never to be met with in the most correct, this locution has become a "household word" with Sir A. Alison. The following examples of it are taken from his "History of Europe during the French Revolution." In his other works the instances of it are also very numerous:—

"The quality *of all others*, by which distinction is acquired."

"The event *of all others* which the Orleans party most ardently desired to avoid."

"A project *of all others* the most unpopular in the central city of Paris."

"The general *of all others* the least qualified to combat the fire and energy of a revolution."

"A state of affairs *of all others* the most calamitous."

"The general *of all others* who approached the nearest to the standard of ideal perfection."

"The act *of all others* which most certainly leads to its own punishment."

"A period *of all others* the most conducive to general happiness."

"Circumstances *of all others* the best calculated to enable the inhabitants to oppose a formidable resistance."

"The lesson *of all others* the most strongly illustrated by the events of the war."

"A situation *of all others* the most favourable for half-disciplined troops."

"A feeling which is *of all others* the most effectual extinguisher to the utility of any public officer."

"Circumstances *of all others* the most favourable for the development of the principles of freedom."

"The language *of all others* the most calculated to rouse national efforts."

"The means *of all others* the least fitted to carry it into effect."

"The troops were scattered in a way *of all others* the most favourable for being cut up in detail."

"The plan of invasion *of all others* the best calculated to concentrate the whole forces of the Alliance."

"The people *of all others* where at once general progress is the greatest and private discontent the most universal."

"A situation *of all others* the most favourable for carrying on intrigues with both countries."

"A consideration *of all others* the best calculated to inspire forbearance and moderation."

"The circumstance *of all others* the most prejudicial to the interests of France."

"The circumstance *of all others* which had the greatest influence in inducing that state of society."

"The circumstance *of all others* which chiefly contributed to this turn of the public mind."

In the following quotations the word "But" is ludicrously repeated at almost every line:—

"*But*, absorbed as he was with his studies, Whethamstede was not a mere

'— Bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head.'

It is true, he was an inveterate reader, amorously inclined towards vellum tomes and illuminated parchments, *but* he did not covet them, like some collectors, for the mere pride of possessing them; *but* gloried in feasting on their intellectual charms and delectable wisdom, and sought in their attractive pages the means of becoming a better Christian and a wiser man. *But* he was so excessively fond of books, and became so deeply engrossed with his book-collecting pursuits, that it is said some of the monks shewed a little dissatisfaction at his consequent neglect of the affairs of the monastery; *but* these are faults I cannot find the heart to blame him for; *but* am inclined to consider his conduct fully redeemed by the valuable encouragement he gave to literature and learning."

A few pages farther on the *but* recurs in the following passage:—

"*But* with all these high qualities our notions of propriety are somewhat shocked at the open manner in which he kept his mistress Eleanor Cobham; *but* we can scarcely agree in the condemnation of the generality of historians for his marrying

her afterwards, *but* regard it rather as the action of an honorable man, desirous of making every reparation in his power. *But* the 'pride of birth' was sorely wounded by the espousals."

These passages are extracted from Merryweather's "Bibliomania in the Middle Ages," a book which, though purporting to treat of the "love of books," is lamentably deficient in that which constitutes an essential quality of every good book — correct composition. In almost every instance the sentences are strung together by conjunctions and expletives, in the manner of the passages above quoted. The author seems to have formed his style upon that of poor John Bunyan, who presents us with this curious sample of the species *But* :—

"I saw simple Slowth and Presumption lie asleep, a little out of the way, as I came, with irons upon their heels; *but* do you think I could awake them? I also saw Formality and Hypocrisy come tumbling over the wall, to go (as they pretended) to Zion; *but* they were quickly lost, even as I myself did tell them; *but* they would not believe; *but* above all, I found it hard work to get up this hill, and as hard to come by the lions' mouths; and truly if it had not been for the good man the Porter that stands at the gate, I do not know *but* that, after all, I might have gone back again; *but* now, I thank God, I am here, and I thank you for receiving me."— *Pilgrim's Progress.*

The greatest promoter, however, of this slovenliness is Sir Archibald Alison. In his "History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon," the attentive reader must have remarked the constant recurrence of the expression "Great as,"

at the beginning of a sentence. Of this I have noted the following instances in the first volume of that work; but the expression occurs in the same form with other adjectives in the place of "great:"—

"*Great and important as were the results* of the social convulsions of France and England, they sank into insignificance compared with those that followed."

"*Great as were these results* to the growth of Russia, still more important were those which followed its intestine convulsions."

"*Great as the acquisitions of the Muscovite power have been,* during the last thirty years, they have almost been rivalled by those of the British in India."

"*Great as was his influence,* unbounded his patronage, immense his revenue, it yet fell short of the wants of his needy supporters."

"*Great and unprecedented as is this simultaneous growth of mankind,* it is yet outstripped by the increase of their industry."

"*Great as are the things which the steam-engine has done for mankind,* it may be doubted whether what it has left undone, are not still more important to human happiness."

"*Great as may be the weight of external evils,* it is as nothing to the sting of the secret mental reproach of having induced them."

"*Great as had been the enthusiasm in* 1789, it was equalled now by the unanimous burst of indignation at the same conquerors."

"*Great as the dangers were which must have beset the legislature,* they were much aggravated by the peculiar situation of the provinces."

"*Great as is the reputation of that noble poem,* that of his lyrical pieces is still greater."

This, for a grave historian, is bad enough; but it is reduced to insignificance by another sample with which Sir Archibald has embellished the same work. In volume I., chapter V., headed "Progress of Literature, Science, the Arts and Manners, in Great Britain after the War," containing less than one hundred pages, there are as many as *twenty-two paragraphs*, each of which begins with the same form of phrase. As a literary curiosity this is worth preserving; while, as a sample of old-womanish twaddle, it has no parallel in any language. I give the sentences in the order in which they occur:—

"*If* the period succeeding the war is one which is not rich in great events, it is fruitful in great men."

"*If* the triumphs of British art and industry have been great during this memorable period, those of its genius and thought have not been less remarkable."

"*If* the wide spread of his fame and deep impression produced by his poems is to be taken as the test of excellence, Campbell is the greatest lyric poet of England."

"*If* the *Pleasures of Hope*, to the end of time, will fascinate the young and the ardent, those of *Memory* will have equal charms for the advanced in years and the reflecting."

"*If* ever two poets arose in striking contrast to each other, Rogers and Southey are the men."

"*If* Southey's knowledge as a historian has impeded his success as a poet, his fancy as a poet has not less seriously marred his fame as a historian."

"*If* Scotland in Brown gave token of its national character, by exhibiting the combination of poetic genius with metaphysical acuteness, the practical and sagacious turn of the Anglo-Saxon mind was not less clearly evinced in Paley."

"*If* original views were awanting in this accomplished writer, they were not so in the great political philosopher of the age, Mr. Malthus."

"*If* Malthus cast a broad and lasting light on political affairs, Davy gave an impulse almost as great to physical science."

"*If* the *Quarterly Review* cannot exhibit such a splendid series of essays from one individual, as those of Macaulay in the *Edinburgh*, it has not the less taken a memorable part in English literature."

"*If* Lord Mahon has left a chasm between the termination of Hume's and the commencement of his own narrative, that important period of English history was not long of being adequately illustrated."

"*If* the reader of the splendid history of Macaulay sometimes regrets the want of the impartial charge of the judge, in the brilliant oratory of the barrister, the student of Miss Strickland meets with excellencies and deficiencies of a somewhat similar character."

"*If* Mitford is sometimes open to the reproach of having too keenly asserted the conservative, it is fortunate for the cause of truth that another distinguished writer has illustrated Grecian history on the opposite side."

"*If* the political events and anxieties of the time have caused the history of Greece to be learned in a very different spirit, a similar effect has appeared in regard to the history of Rome."

"*If* the historians of England exhibit in a clear light the important influence of political convulsions on national literature, the working of the same causes is still more strikingly evinced in our writers of romance."

"*If* the romances of Mr. James are deficient in the delineation of the secret feelings of the heart, the same cannot be said of the next great novelist whose genius has adorned English literature."

"*If* some of his other works are not of equal merit, it is

only the usual fate of genius to be more happy in some conceptions than in others."

"*If* a great work has been wanting to the fame of Hazlitt and Croly, the same may with still more justice be said of a very eminent man who has illustrated the age by his profound and original thoughts."

"*If* the house of mourning in real life ever adjoins the house of joy, the same vicissitude is not less conspicuous in literature."

"*If* Landseer has struck out a new vein—the pathetic in animals, Chantrey has equally illustrated himself by opening a fresh mine—the pathetic in sculpture."

If Kemble overcame many personal disadvantages, by the lofty tone of his mind, Miss O'Neil had every gift of nature to aid a tender and impassioned disposition in melting the hearts of the spectators."

"*If* power of the very highest order, united to fascinating beauty, could have arrested the degradation of the stage, Miss Helen Faucit would have done so."

What is noteworthy in these phrases is not so much the mere *if;* for *ifs* will be found in every writer. It is the peculiar structure of the sentence, and its constant application to literary and scientific matters, by way of comparison or contrast. When Alison has occasion in a subsequent place (vol. iii., chapter xviii.) to speak of the *Literature of France during and after the Restoration*, the everlasting *if* is again called into play :—

> "Your *if* is your only peace-maker;
> Much virtue in *if*."

"*If* the literature of England after the war gave proof of the animating influence of the contest in drawing forth the

national talent, the same effect was conspicuous in a still more remarkable degree in the sister kingdom."

"*If* the literature of France during the Restoration was less measured than that of Louis XIV., it was more varied: *if* it exhibited less of the rules of art, it had more of the originality of nature."

"*If* this is true of nearly the entire school of modern French novels, what shall be said of its drama?"

"*If* the German drama is the glory, the French is the disgrace of our contemporary European literature."

"*If* with these many brilliant and noble qualities, Chateaubriand had united an equal amount of strength of mind and solidity of judgment, he would have been one of the most remarkable men that modern Europe ever produced."

"*If* Chateaubriand, notwithstanding the brilliancy of his genius, or in consequence of that very brilliancy, was little qualified to act in public affairs, the same cannot be said of the next great orator, who rose into greatness with the Restoration—M. Guizot."

"*If* Chateaubriand has visited the Holy Sepulchre with the mingled feelings of a classical scholar and a devout pilgrim, Michaud has gone over the same ground with the heroic spirit of a crusader."

"*If* ever two great men stood in striking contrast to each other, it was Guizot and his victorious antagonist in the strife which overturned the throne of Louis Philippe."

"*If* the turn of their respective minds is considered, it will not appear surprising that Guizot was the Conservative minister, Lamartine the Democratic leader, on that occasion."

"*If* Lamartine's accuracy of research, patience of investigation, and sobriety of judgment had been equal to his vividness of fancy, warmth of imagination, and fervour of eloquence, he would have made the greatest and most popular historian of modern times."

"*If* the campaign of Wagram has found a worthy annalist in General Pelet, and those of Austerlitz and Friedland in

General Mathieu Dumas, that of 1812 has called forth the powers of another writer equally suited to its description—Count Segur."

"*If* the military histories of France during the Restoration is a striking proof how strongly the public mind had been turned to warlike achievements, the still greater crowd of memoirs is a yet stronger proof how violently the passions of the people had been excited by the Revolution."

"*If* any proof were required of the difficulty of the task which M. Villemain has undertaken in giving a history of literature, and of the skill with which he has surmounted it, it will be found in the great work of M. Ginguené."

"*If* Ginguené is in a manner buried under the stores of his own learning, and already forgotten except as a storehouse of erudition, the same charge of want of generalisation cannot be made against the great political philosopher of the nineteenth century—M. de Tocqueville."

"*If* the literature of France during the eighteenth century may justly pride itself on the compositions of Buffon, that of the nineteenth is equally distinguished by the writings of Cuvier, by far the first of the inquirers into the pristine order of creation."

"*If* Delille failed because he was not the man of the age, Beranger has succeeded because he was."

"*If* the love of admiration is 'par excellence' the great characteristic of French women, Mademoiselle Mars was the incarnation of their temperament."

"*If* modern French architecture is remarkable for the imposing effects which it exhibits and the purity of taste by which it is distinguished, the same cannot be said of its painting."

It was my intention to wind up in this place our long list of *Ifs;* but the recent appearance of a fifth volume of the work from which they are taken, enables me to furnish the reader with

some further examples. Those already cited are from the chapters on English and French literature; those now presented are from that on German literature. Sir Archibald seems to reserve this species of jugglery for the exhibition of his views of men of letters, science, and art. He pulls the strings, and the several puppets, each heralded by its proper *if*, pass in rapid succession before the reader's bewildered eye.

"*If*, in 'Oberon,' Wieland has rivalled Ariosto, and fascinated the world by the most charming conceptions that were ever formed of the romantic school, in his lesser poems he has rivalled Ovid in the skilful use he has made of classical imagery."

"*If* Goethe's genius was somewhat dimmed by the multitude of objects which it embraced, the same cannot be said of the author who with all obtains the second, with some the first, place in German literature."

"*If* general and widespread celebrity is to be taken as the test of excellence, the next place must be assigned to the great epic poet of Germany, Klopstock."

"*If* celebrity on the stage and temporary theatrical success is to be taken as a test of real dramatic excellence, Kotzebue is to be placed at the very head of the literature of Europe in that department."

"*If* ever two branches of literature stood forth in striking contrast to each other, it is the poetry and prose of Germany."

"*If* general and widespread fame, at least among scholars and learned men, is to be taken as the test of real merit, Niebuhr must be placed at the head of the historians of Germany."

"*If* Niebuhr's usefulness and fame have been seriously impaired by the want of lucidity in his style, of order in his arrangement, and brevity in his expression, the same cannot be

said of the next great author who has devoted his energies to the elucidation of ancient story."

"*If* Heeren has seldom struck out original thought himself, there is no one who has furnished in greater profusion the materials of it to others."

"*If* the Revolution in France has warmed into life a crowd of memoir-writers, the War of Liberation in Germany has been hardly less efficacious in calling forth a host of writers who have portrayed, with equal felicity, the changes and feelings of that eventful era."

"*If* it be true, as the wisest men in every age have affirmed, that—

'Music hath charms to tame the savage breast,'

there is no country which should be so civilized as Germany."

"*If* Beethoven is the Michael Angelo of Music, Mozart is its Raphael."

Alison has a peculiarity of a still more offensive form, which consists in the repetition of certain words in close succession to each other. Of this I have noted the following instances in his "History of Europe during the French Revolution:"—

"The circumstance which ultimately brought about the contest was the *success* with which Cardinal Richelieu *succeeded* in destroying the rural influence of the French nobility."

"It would seem as if in the very disposition of the seats, it had been *intended* to point to the *intended* union of the Orders."

".Crowds of all classes daily came to Versailles to *encourage* the members in their *courageous* resistance to the measures of the court."

"The able leaders of the popular party, keeping in *advance* of the movement, *advanced* steadily in their career of usurpation."

" Lafayette, who was *employed* on the frontier at the head of the army, *employed* his immense influence for the same object."

" Cradled in snowy mountains and *habituated* to severe *habits*, the Swiss peasantry exhibited the same features."

" The French leaders were not insensible to the danger arising from the *attack* of so formidable a coalition of foreign powers as was now preparing to *attack* them."

" He was at first *successful*, and *succeeded* in obtaining possession of Breda."

" The troops which the chiefs commanded were *divided* into three *divisions*."

" To oppose this formidable invasion, the Royalists were *divided* into four *divisions*."

" They *formed* the nucleus from which those intrepid bands of Chouans were *formed*."

" Another striking proof of the *consequences* of disorders *consequent* on popular ambition."

" *Consequences* so extraordinary, so unlooked-for to every class of society, from the throne to the cottage, are singularly instructive as to the *consequences* of revolutions."

" Contrary to all *expectation*, and in opposition to what might have been *expected* from the previous energy of their measures."

" A *compulsory* regulation which *compelled* the shopkeepers to accept of the depreciated French assignats."

" We may see in its history what would have been the fate of all the northern nations, if their fierce and unbending *temper* had not been *tempered* by the blood of a more advanced civilisation."

" The cities of Italy have been *celebrated* since the very infancy of civilisation, from the marvellous *celebrity*, in arts and arms, which their inhabitants have attained."

" The Archduke Charles being now assured of the *direction* which Moreau had taken, *directed* Latour and the detached parties to join him."

" The secret spring of *all his actions* was a deep and manly feeling of piety which pervaded *all his actions.*"

" These constituted so many separate republics, who organised themselves after the *model* of the great French *model.*"

" Sir Sidney soon *experienced* the effects of that feeling, from the treatment which he *experienced* from his enemies on a reverse of fortune."

" Sir Sidney succeeded in getting off by means of fictitious *orders*, which his friends procured, purporting to *order* his transference from the Abbaye to the Temple."

" In the *expectation* of what he might *expect* from the probity of the English Cabinet, Sir Sidney was not mistaken."

" Those *movements* were all punctually executed, notwithstanding the excessive rains which impeded the *movements* of the troops."

" From the first the *disposition* of its columns, *disposed* in part in echelon along the road, indicated an intention of retreating in that direction."

" The same *character* has *characterised* their descendants in modern times."

" By the Portuguese *law* every person is *legally* obliged to join the battalions arrayed in defence of the country."

" The principle of *admitting* divorce in many cases was too firmly established in the customs and habits of France, to *admit* of its being shaken."

" The brave Switzers to the north of the St. Gothard evinced the *distinguishing* features which in every age have *distinguished* the nations of German or Teutonic descent."

" This circumstance *renders* his revelations of the political arrangements which *rendered* abortive all the efforts of the allies, of peculiar value."

" They do not feel the ardent desire for *elevation*, which, in free communities, *elevates* a few to greatness, and consigns many to disappointment."

" Under the *influence* of so many concurring causes the French *influence* rapidly declined."

" The new ministry *introduced* at once a total change of system, by the *introduction* of enlistments for a limited period of service."

" The Cinca, a *mountain* torrent which descends from the *mountains* on the Catalonian frontier of the Ebro."

" They are totally incapable of appreciating the merits of a *system of defence*, in which ultimate success was to be purchased by a cautious *system of defensive* policy."

" It is impossible to doubt that Lords Grey and Grenville were right in the *conditions* which they so firmly insisted on as a *condition* of their taking office."

" The high premium on gold was evidently among the political or natural *causes* which at that period *caused* the precious metals to be all drained out of the country."

" Seduced by these flattering *appearances*, the monarch *appears* for a time to have trusted to the pleasing hope that his difficulties were at an end."

" The *contest* in Catalonia during the whole Peninsular *contest* was of a very peculiar kind."

" This renowned fortress was of the very highest *importance*, from its great strength and *important* situation."

" To *assist* him in the discharge of his numerous and onerous duties, he was *assisted* by a great council, styled the Real Audiencia."

" To *favor* the monopolies established in *favor* of the dominant race, numerous restrictions were established."

" Many a gallant breast there throbbed for the *decisive* moment which was to *decide* this long-continued duel between the two nations."

" Wellington was *anxious* to be relieved from all *anxiety* in that quarter."

" The army is kept up by a compulsory *levy* of so many per hundred or thousand, *levied* under the authority of an imperial ukase."

" The *delays* consequent on the march of so many detached bodies, *delayed* the commencement of the battle till seven."

" A large *supply* of mules was obtained to *supply* the great destruction of those useful animals during the retreat from Burgos."

" The crowd of camp *followers* and sutlers who *followed* in their train, swept the ground so completely."

" Notwithstanding his defeat at Castalla, and the *subsequent* operations of Sir John Murray, of which an account will *subsequently* be given."

" On one *occasion*, in the autumn of 1813, he had *occasion* to pass a place where seventy caissons had been blown up."

" With these words he re-entered his cabinet, and *remained* the whole *remainder* of the day wrapped in thought."

" Spalatro was taken the same day, and the entire *reduction* of the province and eastern shores of the Adriatic effected, by the *reduction* of the strong fortress of Zara."

" The *strength* of the garrison of the latter city, including the marine forces, was twelve thousand *strong*."

" The peculiar political situation of their commander-in-chief *rendered* it very doubtful whether they would *render* any very efficient service."

" It is not the *points* of resemblance between Canada and the United States of America, it is the *points* of their difference which require to be *pointed* out."

" The *usages* of warfare, alike in ancient and modern times, have *usually* saved from destruction, edifices which are dedicated to the purposes of religion."

" *Failures* to any great extent in the American provinces, never *fail* to produce stagnation and distress."

" *Obligations* were regarded by the latter as *obligatory*, though ruinous."

" The first of these was the *establishment* of the Protestant, as the *established* religion of Great Britain."

The reader will perceive that this is one of those stereotyped blunders, so common in Sir A. Alison. The following examples are taken from his "History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon:"—

"The designs of Providence *extend* to the *extension* and dispersion of the species."

"The Whigs were fain to obtain the *aid* of any power which could *aid* them in gaining a majority."

"The *preparations* for the grand expedition to South America, which had been so long in *preparation*, went on without intermission."

"Nicholas *undertook* and successfully carried through a still more difficult *undertaking*."

"The concourse of strangers *attracted* by its celebrity, its monuments, its galleries, its theatres, and its other *attractions*, was immense."

"These ulcerated *feelings* arose from disappointed ambition, rather than patriotic *feeling*."

"Ministers had *information* of their designs from the *information* of Edwards."

"One only ray of *hope* remained to the royal family from the situation of the Duchess de Berri, which gave *hopes* that an heir might yet be preserved for the monarchy and the *hopes* of the assassin blasted."

"The Irish or Celtic character has in general been found deficient in that practical *turn* and intuitive sagacity, which is necessary to *turn* them to any good purpose."

"The contraction of the currency and consequent *fall* of the prices of agricultural produce fifty per cent., *fell* with crushing effect upon the country."

"Ireland, a purely agricultural state, upon which the *fall* of 50 per cent. in its produce *fell* with unmitigated severity."

"Verona exhibited more than the *usual* union of rank, genius, celebrity, and beauty, which are *usually* attracted by such assemblages."

"It led to one *result* of a very important character, and which, in its ultimate *results*, was very prejudicial to the Government."

"In *addition* to these there was *superadded* a still more fatal and indelible source of discord."

"On the other side she touches those states *divided* by the *divisions* of religion and race."

"In a few weeks he was at the *head* of 1,500 troops, chiefly horsemen, at the *head* of which he entered Jassy."

"They consented to *maintain* such troops in them as might be deemed necessary to *maintain* their tranquillity."

"A supplementary *vote* of 37,000,000 francs was *voted* to the government without opposition."

"The foundlings, when they grow up, *find* they cannot, from the want of considerable proprietors, *find* employment in the country."

"Guizot has embodied in his *views* a more extensive *view* of human affairs."

"It is not the least of the many *attractions* which permanently *attract* strangers to the French capital."

"The grant has produced the magnificent *addition* which now *adds* so much to the effect of that noble structure."

"By these appointments the long-*established* dominion of the Tories, *established* by Mr. Pitt in 1784, was subverted."

"The constituents of the boroughs were persons *renting* tenements, *rented* at from £10 to £20."

"Earl Grey was *deluded* in regard to the influence which would direct these boroughs, by the same *general delusion* which was then so *general*."

"If any *proof* of it were requisite, it would be *proved* in the fact that forty-two petitions against returns were presented in 1832."

"They then *adopted* the following resolution, which with some difficulty was *adopted*, and sent off to the Duke."

"So general was the feeling on this *subject*, that it was made the *subject* of a distinct pledge to the electors."

"Two great sins—one of omission, and one of *commission*—have been *committed* by the states of Europe."

"Twelve persons were seized in the cathedral under the most suspicious circumstances, but five *only* were convicted, and that *only* of the minor offence of concealing a conspiracy, which was *only* punishable with imprisonment."

"This act of grace *embraced* persons of all religious persuasions, not those only who had *embraced* the Lutheran creed."

"Important restrictions fettered the *powers* of the central assembly, and almost nullified its *powers*."

"It was universally found in Germany that there were a dozen applicants for every *vacant* situation, how humble soever, that fell *vacant*."

"Society was seated on as solid a basis, as its external *appearance appeared* tranquil and unruffled."

"In many of his works we see a complete acquaintance with the secret *springs* of evil which are ever *springing* up in the breast."

"His inmost soul was filled with the thrilling *thoughts* which emerge as it were through the chinks of *thought*."

"At their *head* was a large part of the Chamber of Deputies, *headed* by Marshal Clausel."

"A place not less important in working out moderation of *conduct*, after the Reform Bill had passed, must be assigned to the *conduct* of the Government."

"Such was the pitiable state of weakness to which the British naval force had been *reduced* by the ceaseless *reductions* of previous years."

"It soon *appeared* that these diplomatic courtesies meant more than *appeared* on the surface."

"The terrible War of Succession had now arrived at such a *point* that the royal authority seemed on the *point* of being destroyed."

"The Government were extremely disconcerted by this acquittal, the more *especially* as the evidence, *especially* against the military, was so decisive."

"The few who *regarded* them in their true light were *regarded* as mere dreamers."

"This *proposal* was no great violation of the liberties of the *subject*, for it only *proposed* to *subject* military persons to the trial of their military superiors."

"At the same time a *grant* of £100,000, which had been *granted* to the sufferers in St. Vincent, was *extended* to £1,000,000, and made to *extend* to the sufferers under the Jamaica insurrection."

But enough for the present of these platitudes!

The writer who, next to Sir Archibald, exhibits most examples of this sort of phrase, is Sir Walter Scott, in whose works, especially his "Life of Napoleon," it is of frequent occurrence.

Among the numerous devices resorted to by authors in our day, in order to secure unmerited popularity and importance, may be reckoned the adoption of mysterious, out-of-the-way "titles" for their works. Some titles are studiously far-fetched; others are mere pegs to hang a subject upon. Some promise more than they perform; others less. Your popular author knows enough of his craft to be convinced that the maxim, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, holds good even in this

age of discoveries; and that a book with a plain, honest name will not sell, while one with a startling title is almost certain to become attractive. "Have you read the new novel?" inquires young miss of some female friend; and as we no longer live in an age when the question might be answered without reference to the name of the book, her friend naturally replies: "Which?"—"Why, Kaloolah, my dear."—"Kaloolah! pray what is that?"—"Oh, then, you have *not* read it. Beautiful! most interesting! and what a funny name, too! It was the curiosity to see what might be found under such a strange title that stimulated me to become acquainted with the work; and right glad I am of my venture. Do get the book and read it: you will really find it most interesting." Where is the young lady that would not be anxious to read an interesting work with a strange title, so as to be able to name it, and talk of it to her companions? From this category, however, I must except the Book of Travels known by the name of "Eōthen." The author of that very able work stood in no need of such meretricious aids to popularity.

It is melancholy to think how honest people are defrauded of their money in consequence of the fallacious titles that are now commonly adopted for the worthless literature of the day. The use of false titles ought to be made punishable at law,

like the use of false coins, with this difference, that the imposition in the latter case is less injurious, because more easily detected, than in the former, where you have often to wade through a couple of volumes of sheer trash, before you can discover that you have been duped.

CRITICISM.

"Nearly all Criticism, at the present day, is the public effect of private acquaintance."

SIR BULWER LYTTON.

CRITICISM.

Philosophical Criticism was almost unknown in our literature until the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that period a Spirit of Inquiry, engendered by the political doctrines of the day, infused itself into every department of literature and science; and English Criticism soon became remarkable for the extent of its erudition and the boldness of its strictures. It would have been fortunate for the cause of learning, if these advantages had been directed to their proper ends. But no sooner did the Spirit of Philosophy begin to manifest itself, than it became allied to the Spirit of Party.

Of this unnatural alliance the natural offspring were the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* Reviews; for, if it is true that those periodicals gave the first indication of a departure from the timid and time-serving disposition, which had theretofore characterized our critical canons; it is equally true that they were the first to prostitute the Art of Criticism to the service of Politics and

Partisanship. Undoubted as was the ability of the reviewers, and frequently as it was exercised in the encouragement of talent and the furtherance of truth, it, in too many instances, was made subservient to the unworthy purposes of hunting down a political opponent or bolstering up a political ally. Whiggism and Toryism were at the bottom of all their judgments; and literary productions were not reviewed solely with reference to their intrinsic merits: the author's position and personal character were also taken into the account, and made the subject of acrimonious animadversion.

Criticism has long ceased to be a separate province in the republic of letters. It is now parcelled out indiscriminately to every pretender, of whatever coterie or creed; and there is scarcely a newspaper in the kingdom that does not assert and exercise its right to review the literature of the day. The consequence is, that literary partisanship, which was confined at first to our great critical organs, pervades almost every branch of journalism at the present hour. One newspaper gives a favourable account of a book, because it has received an advertisement from the author; another, because it has received none, declines to notice it. A third will eulogize it because it comes out under the patronage of a certain publishing firm; a fourth, for the same reason, will cry it down. Where there is no

particular motive of interest to form or guide the reviewer's judgment, he contents himself with adopting the first notice that comes in his way. Some journal of weight originates an opinion respecting the new work; and the minor reviewer, without giving himself the trouble to read the book, adopts that opinion with such alterations as may be necessary to make it tally with the known principles of his journal. Should there be any gross errors, any palpable blunders, in the original notice, they are copied without suspicion of their existence, and often go the round of the press without detection.

These facts will account, to some extent, for the inaccuracy of our judgments on contemporary writers, as compared with those of a more remote age. It is our peculiar boast that we evince a more correct appreciation of our English classics than was ever attained at any former period; and that the erudition which is lavished on the elucidation of their works, is more varied and extensive than was ever before brought to bear on the subject. But these advantages are neglected or misapplied, when we come to judge of our contemporaries. In our estimate of the dead, we are guided by the wisdom and learning of the past: in our appreciation of the living, we are led astray by the passions and prejudices of recent times. Our judgment, in the one case, is based upon the experience of centuries: in the other it

is warped by the fashionable but distorted standard of the passing hour. We see the Elizabethan writers, as they made themselves; we see the Victorian, as they are made by partisanship and cant. Let any writer attempt to detract from the merits of any of our old poets, or ascribe excellences to them which they do not possess; and forthwith the organs of public opinion will raise their voices in condemnation of such a proceeding. As regards our contemporaries the case is different. Their works are not always estimated according to their worth or worthlessness, but according to the political leaning of the reviewer, or the degree of popularity which the authors enjoy, whatever may be the source of that popularity. An author who, in this way, has once become a favourite with the public, may palm upon his patrons any quantity of rubbish or twaddle. His established popularity is his passport to favour; while the obscure or modest author, who has neither the means nor the wish to seek access to public patronage by such expedients, will meet with nothing but indifference or contempt.

In illustration of these remarks we may cite the instances of Dickens and Sir Bulwer Lytton. Though both are highly popular, yet their popularity is not wholly ascribable to their merits, unquestionable as these are: it is partly the result of favouritism or partisanship. Doubtless,

it is chiefly to their great abilities that they are indebted for the rank which they *have* attained; but it is not by those abilities alone that they preserve that rank. A glaring proof of this was afforded by the publication of Dickens's "American Notes for general Circulation." Here was a work of the most ordinary and common-place character, puffed into importance and circulation, not on account of its novelty or interest, but because it was written by Mr. Dickens. Had the author been—

"A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown,"

the book would scarcely have obtained any notice, or would have been stigmatized as the production of some "twaddling Tourist." One or two organs of the press were honest enough to express their opinion as to the spuriousness of the "Notes;" but their "still small voices" were stifled in the clamour of favouritism and the whinings of cant.

Sir Bulwer Lytton is another instance. Having attained the foremost rank as a novelist, nothing will satisfy his ambition but the highest eminence as a poet. His boldest flight in this latter capacity is his poem of "King Arthur," a performance which I name in this place, not to detract from its merits, whatever these may be, but to illustrate the fact that merit in a writer is not, as it should be, the only source

of his popularity. On the appearance of this poem, it was eulogized in the following strain by the "Sun" newspaper:—

"This grand epic of 'King Arthur' must henceforth be ranked amongst our national masterpieces. In it we behold the crowning achievement of the author's life. His ambition cannot rise to a higher altitude. He has accomplished that which once had its seductions for the deathless and majestic mind of Milton. He has now assumed a place among the kings of English poetry."

This is the opinion of a political journal. Let us hear that of the "Athenæum," a periodical of acknowledged ability, of the widest circulation, peculiarly devoted to literature, and professedly unconnected with politics:—

"Examples could be counted by the hundred exhibiting carelessness in craftsmanship. This carelessness, too, takes the forms of strange license. Adjectives are made into verbs, Teutonicisms, Scotticisms, Gallicisms, strewn freely about. We cannot allow this epic to decide its author's claim to enrolment among the poets of England. There are few well-constructed works of any extent, be the style what it may, and the subject ever so remote and antipathetic, into which a fairly cultivated and conscientious reader cannot read himself by force of endeavour; but this romance has resisted our perseverance. Disappointed by the manner in which the story is treated, we would fain find compensation in insulated passages of wit, fancy, pathos, or terror. But here, too, 'King Arthur' has failed us. It would have given us true pleasure to welcome a good poem from Sir E. B. Lytton's hand; but this 'King Arthur' is not."

The fact is, honest, impartial criticism is almost unknown in our day. The system itself

is radically vicious: authors, and not works, are reviewed; and for one instance that may be quoted of fairness and impartiality, fifty examples of injustice are everywhere apparent. Nay more, a review or journal which should depart from the common practice, and set out with the determination to steer a straightforward course, would soon find to its cost that honesty is *not* the best policy; and that, to insure an ordinary share of subscribers, it must compete with its contemporaries in partiality and cant. Whenever a new work of any mark makes its appearance, the few journals that are unconnected with politics, will proceed at once to review it; and, in general, you may rely on the correctness of their decisions. Not so the political journals: these, for the most part, reserve their fire till primed by the author or his friends. If the work possesses uncommon merit, it will force itself into notice despite their silence; but if it is a work of average ability, a work, in fact, which, from its very character, stands most in need of a helping hand and a fair measure of critical justice, it is either consigned to oblivion or "damned with faint praise."

There is no living author perhaps who has shown greater sensibility on the score of such criticism than Sir Bulwer Lytton himself. In "England and the English," he expatiates upon

it at considerable length. One of the main causes to which he ascribes its baneful effects is the "Anonymous;" a cause, however, which contributes but slightly to their production. No doubt, the "Anonymous" has its evils; nor, as Sir Bulwer seems to think, would these evils be diminished by the "complete veil" which such a character, thoroughly sustained, would throw around the critic. We have had but one *Junius*, and we are not desirous of the advent of Junius the *Second*. The bitter personal hostility, the insatiable rancour, the exaggerations and misstatements, which disgrace that writer's performances, would never have been carried to such an unscrupulous extent, had his real name been given to the world; had he not resolved that "his secret should perish with himself." On the other hand, the anonymous writer, whose veil is incomplete, is as good as known; and any one, upon inquiry, may learn who and what he is. If not generally known, he cannot fail to become so, sooner or later; and his fairness is in proportion to his regard for truth. Take, for example, Sir Bulwer Lytton himself, who, in the "New Tymon," a metrical satire, which he published anonymously, but with an incomplete veil, has been as just and manly, as he had been some years before in his acknowledged prose work of "England and the English." The fact is, that a thoroughly sustained character of the "Anony-

mous," like Junius, only enables the writer to "deal damnation round the land" with thorough impunity. Recklessness then assumes the mask of sincerity, and rigour degenerates into cant. Junius, unknown, has obtained celebrity; known, he would have met with no small share of contempt.*

* Notwithstanding the diversity of opinion that still prevails on the vexed question of the authorship of the "Letters of Junius," it would be idle to deny that the greatest amount of evidence is in favour of the claim of Sir Philip Francis. That Burke was in the secret, and suggested some of the thoughts and sentiments, scattered through the "Letters," seems very probable. But everything goes to show that Francis was the *writer;* and that the language and style are those of the man who "wished that Burke would let him teach him English," and who insisted that "polish is material to preservation."

Among the circumstantial proofs in favour of Francis, adduced by Mr. Wade (Bohn's edition, 1850), is the particular expression *so*, of which he cites the following instances from the writings of Sir Philip Francis:—

Sir P. Francis.—"I slave myself to death, and write and speak on instant impressions; *so* I am sorry if I have offended you."—*Junius Identified.*

Sir P. Francis to Mr. Burke, Feb. 19, 1790.—"I wish you were at the devil for giving me all this trouble; and *so* farewell."

Sir P. Francis, August 20, 1804.—"My present intention is to visit you about the 10th of next month, or perhaps a little sooner; and *so*, dear children, farewell." — *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. iv.

Mr. Wade then cites this parallel instance from Junius:—

Junius.—"Pray tell me whether George Onslow means to keep his word with you;" and ends, "and *so* I wish you a good night."—*Private Letter to Woodfall,* No. 5.

Neither would the practice of affixing the writer's name, as recommended by Sir Bulwer

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To this instance I am able to add seven others from Junius, which appear to have escaped the notice of Mr. Wade:—

"You seem to have dropped the affair of your regiment; *so* let it rest."—*Letter to Sir W. Draper*, No. 7.

"Whenever you have anything to communicate to me, let the hint be thus, C at the usual place; and *so* direct to Mr. John Fretly."—*Private Letter to Woodfall*, No. 5.

"Some others of my letters may be added, and *so* throw out a hint that you have reason to suspect they are by the same author."—*Private Letter to Woodfall*, No. 7.

"This paper should properly have appeared to-morrow, but I could not compass it; *so* let it be announced to-morrow, and printed Wednesday."—*Private Letter to Woodfall*, No. 24.

"I have no doubt of what you say about David Garrick, *so* drop the note."—*Private Letter to Woodfall*, No. 43.

"I think I have now done my duty by you, *so* farewell."—*Private Letter to Woodfall*, No. 46.

"As to other passages, I have no favour or affection, *so* let all go."—*Private Letter to Wilkes*, No. 72.

It has been asserted that Sir Philip Francis, in order to encourage the belief that he was Junius, had made a practice of imitating the style of that writer. This assertion is sufficiently futile in itself; but its absurdity is clearly demonstrated by the coincidences which I have pointed out. Junius's "Private Letters" to Woodfall, which are shown to contain repeated instances of the peculiar expression *so*, were not published till 1813; while the letters of Sir Philip Francis, in which the same expression is of frequent occurrence, were all written several years before that period. In 1790 and 1804, Sir Philip could have no knowledge of the "Private Letters" to Woodfall, except as the writer of them; and when, in his correspondence during those years, he made use of expressions and phrases similar to those in the "Private Letters," it is clear that he was imitating (all the while unconsciously) no one but himself. In no other sense can he be said to have imitated Junius.

Lytton, be attended with unalloyed good. Many of the evils of the present system would still prevail, and others, now unknown, would be introduced. Look at any of the remarkable critiques that have been published with the writer's name: what do you find? In every instance great ability, an appreciation of certain beauties, an eye for certain defects, much erudition and research. But the partiality in one case, the personal antipathy in another, the political bias in a third, the want of discrimination in some, the exaggeration of excellences or defects by all, are conspicuous throughout. In almost every instance the reviewer seems to be prompted by a vulgar desire to gratify his partiality or dislike, rather than by the commendable wish to do justice to the author, or to instruct the public taste. This is a deplorable state of things, and the true cause of it is to be found in the prevalence of dishonesty and cant, and not in the publication or concealment of the critic's name. Criticism, in fact, has become a trade, and so long as that lasts, partiality and injustice will be persevered in, whether the critic's name is given or withheld.

Before criticism became a trade, there was some sincerity about it; but of late years it has, like everything else, put on the semblances of cant. One of the best of our modern critics, William Hazlitt, is also one of the most infected with this

disease. His critical acumen was very great, and when he chose to exercise it without regard to his personal or political feelings, he could do so with great power and brilliant effect. In general, however, the tone of his criticism betrays either prejudice or partisanship; and as to cant, he speaks of it with an amusing unconsciousness, like one who is free from it himself. A curious instance of this occurs in his remarks upon Byron:—

"There is one subject on which Lord Byron is fond of writing, on which I wish he would not write—Bonaparte. Not that I quarrel with his writing for him or against him, but with his writing both for him and against him."—*Lectures on the English Poets.*

What, let me ask, is the meaning of this? At first it has a look of conceit about it, but at bottom it is nothing but cant. Hazlitt was a great admirer of Bonaparte and a small admirer of Byron. He liked the one as much as he disliked the other. According to his notions of poetic justice, because Byron wrote in praise of Bonaparte, he should not have written in disparagement of him. If Byron, like some of Hazlitt's favourite poets, had chosen idiots and asses for his themes, he might have written whatever he pleased. But because he meddles with Bonaparte, he must restrict the exercise of the splendid God's gift with which he is endowed, to such portraiture of him as shall be acceptable

to Hazlitt. Surely, if any great character in modern times has pursued a career of good and evil, alternately presenting themes for censure and for praise, it is Bonaparte: and if any modern poet was gifted with genius to do justice to both, it is Lord Byron. But Hazlitt, the king of the critics, has put his veto upon Byron's poetic miracles, and the thing must not be.

> "De par le Roi, défences à Dieu
> De faire miracles en ce lieu."

This sentence of interdiction by the king of the critics against the king of the poets, is amusing enough; but still more amusing are the reasons assigned for it. "Besides," says Hazlitt, "Bonaparte is a subject for history and not for poetry." A motive so flimsy, so thoroughly *cantish*, could hardly be assigned for interdicting the exercise of poetic power. Yet so it is: the critic Hazlitt issues his canons, and one of these is that, because a thing belongs to history, it is excluded from the province of poetry. True, history is not always poetry; but why should not poetry be sometimes history? Most of the great poems in all languages are to some extent historical: and there is so much poetry in the history of Bonaparte, that almost every poet, from Lebrun to Beranger, has made him the subject of his highest efforts. Moreover, a considerable portion of the poetry of our generation

derives its significance from the history of this very man, Bonaparte; and the chief occupation of after-ages will be to turn to account the poetical materials with which it abounds. How then are we to explain critic Hazlitt's veto in this business? The only possible explanation of it is that we live in an age of verbal decorum.

Another noticeable sample of *critical* cant in Hazlitt has reference to Moore. Speaking of "Lalla Rookh" he says:—

"Mr. Moore ought not to have written *Lalla Rookh*, even for three thousand guineas. His fame is worth more than that." —*Lectures on the English Poets.*

That Moore's fame is worth more than three thousand guineas (the price he received for the poem in question) no one will deny. A poet's fame is worth more than all the gold in California. But how far did Moore's fame suffer by his writing "Lalla Rookh?" That poem is regarded by some as his best performance, and by all as the one which, next to the "Irish Melodies," has contributed most to his fame. And even supposing that "Lalla Rookh" has not enhanced its author's fame, can it be said, with any sincerity or truth, that it has detracted from it?

The author of "Curiosities of Literature" appears to most advantage when transcribing his anecdotes from their foreign sources; but whenever he ventures upon any "Curiosities" of his

own, he seldom fails to make himself ridiculous. Witness the following bit of philosophico-critical cant, on the subject of the lost treasures of literature:—

"I believe that a philosopher would consent to lose any poet to regain an historian. Nor is this unjust; for some future poet may arise to supply the vacant place of a lost poet, but it is not so with the historian. Fancy may be supplied, but truth, once lost in the annals of mankind, leaves a chasm never to be filled."—*Curiosities.*

I believe it would be difficult to crowd into the limited compass of six lines such another combination of ignorance, absurdity, unfounded assumption, false induction, vitiated taste, and sentimental cant, as is exhibited in the above passage. Did D'Israeli weigh the sentiments of philosophers in the circumscribed scale of his own mind? Or was he ignorant of the fact, that there is a greater sympathy between Philosophy and Poetry than between Philosophy and History; and that a true philosopher would not give up one of our great poets for all the historians that ever lived? "Some future poet may arise to supply the place of the lost poet, but it is not so with the historian." Let us suppose such a poet as Homer, or Virgil, or Dante, or Shakspeare, to be irretrievably lost; how soon does D'Israeli think that such another would arise to fill his place? Is our philosopher aware that every great nation is capable, at any stage of its

progress, of producing great historians; and that it is seldom vouchsafed to any nation, during the whole of its progress, to produce a great poet? At this day (1849) Britain can boast the possession of five of her greatest historians, while she can scarcely exhibit so much as the shadow of a great poet. As a climax to this cant we have a contrast between "Fancy" and the "truth of History." It seems never to have occurred to D'Israeli that history is, in general, but a tissue of fables: that the best of it is that which is most remote from truth: that poetry, on the other hand, is necessarily true: that it is good, better, best, in proportion to the amount of truth it reveals: that (Holy Writ apart), it is the only unadulterated truth under the sun. There is more truth in one line of the "Iliad" than in the whole of the "Cyropædia;" in one passage of Shakspeare than in Hume and Smollett together.

The eloquent language of D'Alambert, when speaking of Richardson as a romance writer, is applicable to the great poet:—

"I dare pronounce that the most veritable history is full of fictions and thy romances full of truths. History paints some individuals: thou paintest the human species. History attributes to some individuals what they have neither said nor done: all that thou attributest to man, he has said and done. History embraces but a portion of duration, a point on the surface of the globe: thou hast embraced all spaces and all times."

But we need not have recourse to the enthusiasm of a foreigner for the refutation of D'Israeli's paradox. Walter Savage Landor, a writer of the highest intellectual range, has given us, in the following words, his estimate of the truth of history :—

"We make a bad bargain when we exchange poetry for truth in the affairs of ancient times, and by no means a good one in any."—*Pericles and Aspasia.*

And again :—

"Perhaps at no time will there be written, by the most accurate and faithful historian, so much of truth as untruth." —*Ibid.*

To these I shall add the testimony of a writer of very little weight in my judgment, but whose authority is of great value in the eyes of D'Israeli : "Memoirs are often dictated by the fiercest spirit of personal rancour, and then histories are composed from memoirs. Where is the truth ?" —This writer is no other than Isaac D'Israeli himself, but Isaac D'Israeli uninfluenced by the spirit of cant.

In the foregoing remarks I have endeavoured to sketch the condition of criticism in the nineteenth century. Of its unsettled state, its contradictory decisions, and its utter worthlessness as a criterion of public taste, the reader will be able to judge by a few samples from the great masters of the art. I shall first give the name

of the author criticised, and then the judgments and names of the critics.

Sir Walter Scott.

"Scotland is proud of her great national minstrel; and as long as she is Scotland will wash and warm the laurels round his brow with rains and winds that will ever keep brightening their glossy verdure. The truth is, that Scotland had forgotten her own history, till Sir Walter burnished it all up till it glowed again—it is hard to say whether in his poetry or in his prose the brightest—and the past became the present. Scott brought his power to bear on his own people, and has achieved an immortal triumph." — WILSON. *Recreations of Christopher North.*

"There is something meretricious in Sir Walter's ballad rhymes. There is a glittering veil thrown over the features of Nature and of old Romance. The details are lost or shaped into flimsy and insipid decorum; and the truth of feeling and of circumstance into a tinkling sound, a tinsel common-place. Sir Walter has either not the faculty or not the will to impregnate his subject by an effort of pure invention. The execution also is much upon a par with the more ephemeral effusions of the press. It is light, agreeable, effeminate, diffuse. As to the rest, and compared with true and great poets, our Scottish minstrel is but a 'metre ballad-monger.' The definition of his poetry is pleasing superficiality. We would rather have written one song of Burns, or a single passage in Lord Byron's 'Heaven and Earth,' or one of Wordsworth's fancies and good-nights, than all his epics."—HAZLITT. *The Spirit of the Age.*

William Wordsworth.

"In describing external Nature as she is, no poet perhaps has excelled Wordsworth—not even Thomson: in embuing her and making her pregnant with spiritualities, till the

mighty mother teems with beauty far more beauteous than ever she had rejoiced in till such communion—he excels all the brotherhood. Therein lies his especial glory, and therein the immortal evidences of the might of his creative imagination. The 'Excursion' is a series of poems all swimming in the light of poetry; some of them sweet and simple; some elegant and graceful; some beautiful and most lovely; some of strength and state; some majestic; some magnificent; some sublime."—Wilson. *Recreations of Christopher North.*

"The 'Excursion' is longer, weaker, and tamer than any of Mr. Wordsworth's other productions, with less boldness of originality and less even of that extreme simplicity and lowliness of tone which wavered so prettily in the *Lyrical Ballads* between silliness and pathos. The volume before us, if we were to describe it very shortly, we should characterise as a tissue of moral and devotional ravings, in which innumerable changes are rung upon a few very simple and familiar ideas; but with such an accompaniment of long words, long sentences, and unwieldy phrases, and such a hubbub of strained raptures and fantastical sublimities, that it is often difficult for the most skilful and attentive student to obtain a glimpse of the author's meaning—and altogether impossible for an ordinary reader to conjecture what he is about. It abounds in mawkish sentiment, inflated description, and details of preposterous minuteness; in truisms, cloudy, wordy, and inconceivably prolix; in rapturous mysticism, mock majesty, and solemn verbosity; in revolting incongruities, and an utter disregard of probability or nature; in puerile singularity, and an affected passion for simplicity and for humble life, most awkwardly combined with a taste for mystical refinements and all the gorgeousness of obscure phraseology."—Jeffrey. *Essays.*

Samuel Rogers.

"There is the 'Pleasures of Memory'—an elegant, graceful, beautiful, pensive, and pathetic poem, which it does one's eyes good to gaze on, one's ears good to listen to, one's very

fingers good to touch, so smooth is the versification and the wire-wove paper. Never will the 'Pleasures of Memory' be forgotten till the world is in its dotage."—Wilson. *Recreations of Christopher North.*

"The transition from these to Mr. Rogers's 'Pleasures of Memory' is not far. He is a very lady-like poet: he is an elegant but feeble writer. He wraps up obvious thoughts in a glittering cover of fine words; is full of enigmas with no meaning to them; is studiously inverted, and scrupulously far-fetched; and his verses are poetry, chiefly because no particle, line, or syllable of them reads like prose. He differs from Milton in this respect, who is accused of having inserted a number of prosaic lines in 'Paradise Lost.' This kind of poetry, which is a more minute and inoffensive species of the Della Cruscan, is like the game of asking what one's thoughts are like. It is a tortuous, tottering, wriggling, fidgety translation of everything from the vulgar tongue into all the tantalizing, teasing, tripping, lisping, *mimminee-pimminee* of the highest brilliancy and fashion of poetical diction. You have nothing like truth of nature or simplicity of expression. The fastidious and languid reader is never shocked by meeting, from the rarest chance in the world, with a single homely phrase or intelligible idea. You cannot see the thought for the ambiguity of the language, the figure for the finery, the picture for the varnish. The whole is refined and frittered away into an appearance of the most evanescent brilliancy and tremulous imbecility. There is no other fault to be found with the 'Pleasures of Memory,' than a want of taste and genius."—Hazlitt. *Lectures on the English Poets.*

Thomas Campbell.

"What shall we say of the 'Pleasures of Hope'? That the harp from which that music breathed was an Æolian harp placed in the window of a high hall, to catch airs from heaven, when heaven was glad, as well she might be, with such moon and such stars, and streamering half the region

with a magnificent aurora borealis. Now the music deepens into a majestic march—now it swells into a holy hymn; and now it dies away elegiac-like, as if mourning over a tomb. Vague, indefinite, uncertain, dream-like, and visionary all; but never else than beautiful; and ever and anon, we know not why, sublime. In his youth Campbell lived where 'distant isles could hear the loud Corbrechtan roar,' and sometimes his poetry is like that whirlpool — the sound as of the wheels of many chariots." — Wilson. *Recreations of Christopher North.*

"Campbell's 'Pleasures of Hope' is of the same school, in which a painful attention is paid to the expression, in proportion as there is little to express, and the decomposition of prose is substituted for the composition of poetry. There are painters who trust more to the setting of their pictures than to the truth of the likeness. Mr. Campbell always seems to me to be thinking how his poetry will look when it comes to be hot-pressed on superfine wove paper; to have a disproportionate eye to points and commas, and a dread of errors of the press. He writes according to established etiquette. He offers the muses no violence. When he launches a sentiment that you think will float him triumphantly for once to the bottom of the stanza, he stops short at the end of the first or second line, and stands shivering on the brink of beauty, afraid to trust himself to the fathomless abyss. *Tutus nimium, timidusque procellarum.* His very circumspection betrays him. The poet, as well as the woman, that deliberates, is undone. He is much like a man whose heart fails him just as he is going up in a balloon, and who breaks his neck by flinging himself out of it, when it is too late. Mr. Campbell, too, often maims and mangles his ideas before they are full-formed, to form them to the Procrustes' bed of Criticism; or strangles his intellectual offspring in the birth, lest it should come to an untimely end in the 'Edinburgh Review.'"—Hazlitt. *Lectures on the English Poets.*

Robert Southey.

"Southey, among our living poets, stands aloof and 'alone in his glory;' for he alone, of them all, has adventured to illustrate in poems of magnitude, the different characters, customs, and manners of nations. 'Joan of Arc' is an English and French story; 'Thalaba,' Arabian; 'Kehama,' Indian; 'Madoc,' Welsh and American; and 'Roderick,' Spanish and Moorish: nor would it be easy to say (setting aside the first, which was a very youthful work) in which of these noble poems Mr. Southey has most successfully performed an achievement entirely beyond the power of any but the highest genius. Seldom, if ever, has one and the same poet exhibited such power in such different kinds of poetry—in truth a master, and in fiction a magician. The greatness as well as the originality of Southey's genius, is seen in the conception of every one of his five chief works. They bear throughout the impress of original power, and breathe a moral charm in the midst of the wildest, and sometimes even extravagant, imaginings, that shall preserve them for ever from oblivion, embalming them in the spirit of delight and of love."—Wilson. *Recreations of Christopher North.*

"Of Mr. Southey's larger epics I have but a faint recollection at this distance of time, but all that I remember of them is mechanical and extravagant, heavy and superficial. His affected, disjointed style is well imitated in the 'Rejected Addresses.' The difference between him and Sir Richard Blackmore seems to be that the one is heavy and the other light, the one solemn and the other pragmatical, the one phlegmatic and the other flippant; and that there is no Gay in the present time to give a Catalogue Raisonné of the performances of the living undertaker of epics. 'Kehama' is a loose, sprawling figure, such as we see cut out of wood or paper, and pulled or jerked with wire or thread to make sudden or surprising motions, without meaning, grace, or nature in them. The little he has done of true or sterling excellence is overloaded by the quantity of indifferent matter which he

turns out every year, 'prosing or versing,' with equally mechanical and irresistible facility. His essays, or political and moral disquisitions, are *not* so full of original matter as Montaigne's. They are second or third rate compositions in that class."—HAZLITT. *Lectures on the English Poets.*

Joanna Baillie.

"But our own Joanna has been visited with a loftier inspiration. She has created tragedies which Sophocles—or Euripides—nay even Æschylus himself might have feared in competition for the crown. She is our Tragic Queen; but she belongs to all places as to all times. Plays on the passions! 'How absurd,' said one philosophical writer: 'this will never do.' It has done—perfectly. What, pray, is the aim of all tragedy? The Stagyrite has told us—to purify the passions by pity and terror. They ventilate and cleanse the soul till its atmosphere is like that of a calm, bright summer day. All plays therefore must be on the passions. One passion was constituted sovereign of the soul in each glorious tragedy—sovereign sometimes by divine right—sometimes an usurper—generally a tyrant. In 'De Montfort' we behold the horrid reign of Hate. But in his sister—the seraphic sway of Love. 'Count Basil!' A woman only could have imagined that divine drama. How different the love Basil feels for Victoria from Antony's for Cleopatra! Pure, deep, high, as the heaven and the sea. Yet on it we see him borne away to shame, destruction, and death. To paint bad passions is not to praise them; they alone can paint them well who hate, fear, or pity them; and therefore Baillie has done so—nay, start not—better than Byron."—WILSON. *Recreations of Christopher North.*

"Miss Baillie must make up this trio of female poets. Her tragedies and comedies, one of each to illustrate each of the passions, separately from the rest, are heresies in the dramatic art. She is a unitarian in poetry. With her the passions are like the French Republic, one and indivisible; they are not so

in nature or in Shakspeare. Mr. Southey has, I believe, somewhere expressed an opinion that the 'Basil' of Miss Baillie is superior to 'Romeo and Juliet.' I shall not stay to contradict him. On the other hand, I prefer her 'De Montfort,' which was condemned on the stage, to some later tragedies which have been more fortunate. Having thus expressed my sense of the merits of this authoress, I must add that her comedy of 'The Election,' performed last summer at the Lyceum with indifferent success, appears to me the perfection of baby-house theatricals. Everything in it has such a *do-me-good* air, is so insipid and amiable. Virtue seems such a pretty playing at make-believe, and vice is such a naughty word. It is a theory of some French author, that little girls ought not to be suffered to have dolls to play with, to call them *pretty dears*, to admire their black eyes and cherry cheeks, to lament and bewail over them, if they fall down and hurt their faces, to praise them when they are good and scold them when they are naughty. It is a school of affectation. Miss Baillie has profited by it. She treats her grown men and women as little girls treat their dolls—makes moral puppets of them, pulls the wires, and they talk virtue and act vice according to their cue and the title prefixed to each comedy or tragedy, not from any real passions of their own, or love either of virtue or vice."—HAZLITT. *Lectures on the English Poets.*

These are a few samples of modern Criticism. Among such a heap of contradictions, how is it possible to form a correct idea of the merits of an author? According to Wilson, Scotland has reason to be proud of her great national minstrel, who has achieved an immortal triumph. In the opinion of Hazlitt, the Scottish minstrel is but a metre ballad-monger, and the definition of his poetry is a pleasing superficiality. In Wordsworth's "Excursion," Wilson sees nothing but elegance, grace, beauty, loveliness, strength, state,

majesty, magnificence, and sublimity. The same poem is defined by Jeffrey as a tissue of moral and devotional ravings, a hubbub of strained raptures and revolting incongruities. According to Wilson, the "Pleasures of Memory" is a beautiful and pathetic poem, not to be forgotten till the world is in its dotage. In the estimation of Hazlitt, the poem is feeble and far-fetched, a compound of ambiguity, finery, and varnish, of evanescent brilliancy and tremulous imbecility. In Wilson's opinion, the music that breathes through the "Pleasures of Hope" is caught from heaven, now deepening into a majestic march, now swelling into a holy hymn, the sound as of the wheels of many chariots, at once beautiful and sublime. In the opinion of Hazlitt, the poem is nothing but the decomposition of prose, a mass of maimed and mangled ideas. Southey's epics, according to Wilson, are an achievement of the highest genius, bearing throughout the impress of original power, and embalmed in the spirit of delight and love. Hazlitt deems the said epics to be mechanical and extravagant, heavy and superficial. Again, if we believe Wilson, Miss Baillie's tragedies are superior to those of Sophocles, Euripides, and even Æschylus. Her dramas are glorious, divine, and such as only a woman could have imagined. If we give ear to Hazlitt, Miss Baillie treats her men and women as little girls treat their dolls;

makes moral puppets of them, pulls the wires, and they talk virtue or vice according to their cue.

There are other contradictions less apparent but equally absurd. For instance, Sir B. Lytton maintains that Lord Byron's tragedies are superior to his Eastern Tales; and Hazlitt asserts that Lord Byron's tragedies are not equal to his other poems; that "they have neither action, character, nor interest, but are a sort of gossamer tragedies, spun out and glittering, and spreading a flimsy veil over the face of nature;" nay, that Lord Byron is "the least dramatic of living poets." Crabbe is described by Lord Byron as

"Nature's sternest painter, yet her best."

And Hazlitt affirms that "Crabbe, for the most part, is only a poet, because he writes in lines of ten syllables." "Of all the song-writers that ever warbled, or chaunted, or sung, the best, in our estimation, is verily none other than Thomas Moore;" so says Wilson. "Mr. Moore," says Hazlitt, "has a little mistaken the art of poetry for the *cosmetic art*. His dissipated, fulsome, painted, patch-work style may succeed in the levity and languor of the *boudoir*, but it is not the style of Parnassus, nor a passport to immortality. He converts the wild harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box." Wordsworth is proclaimed by Wilson as the high-priest of nature; and

Hazlitt asserts that if Wordsworth had lived in any other period of the world, he would never have been heard of. Taylor, speaking of Wordsworth's "Excursion," says, that in a poem upon a large scale, "some parts should be bordering upon prose, some absolutely prosaic." Wilson, an enthusiastic admirer of the same poem, says that "verse, the moment it becomes prosaic, goes to the dogs." Alison describes, in glowing language, the "philosophical mind" of Sir James Mackintosh, his "luminous orations," and the "wisdom of his political essays," and compares him to Bacon and Burke, as "qualified to direct the thoughts of future times." Of the same Sir James Mackintosh, Coleridge says, that "after all his fluency and brilliant erudition, you can rarely carry off anything worth preserving. You might not improperly write upon his forehead, 'Warehouse to let.'"

Such is Criticism in the nineteenth century! There is nothing, however, that affords a clearer demonstration of its abuse than to find the same critic pronouncing contradictory judgments on the same author. That one critic should differ from another is no more than what may be expected in the present unsettled state of the art; but that the same critic should be opposed to himself is a circumstance peculiar to the canting age in which we live. Hazlitt, in a criticism on Lord Byron, says, "he had rather be Sir Walter

Scott, the author of 'Waverley,' than Lord Byron, a hundred times over." And in a critique on Sir Walter Scott, he says, "he would rather have written a single passage in Lord Byron's 'Heaven and Earth,' than all Sir Walter's epics;" meaning, the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," "Rokeby," "Marmion," and the "Lady of the Lake."

So far, although there may be much singularity of opinion, there is no contradiction. The critic prefers "Waverley" to all Byron's poetry a hundred times over; and he prefers one passage in one of Byron's poems to all the poetry of Scott. We only infer from this, that he entertains the most contemptible opinion of Scott's poetry. Now let us hear what he says of that poetry in another place.

"Sir Walter is the most popular of all the poets of the present day, *and deservedly so.*"

Can anything be more glaring than the contradiction involved in these propositions? Of course, we do not require to be told by Hazlitt or any one else that the most worthless poetry may become the most popular. We have an existing proof of that fact in the popularity of Mr. Robert Montgomery's poetry. But we had yet to learn, and Hazlitt, of all modern critics, was bold enough to tell us, that the most contemptible poetry *deserves* to be the most popular. A few

lines farther on the same critic says again of Scott's poetry:—

"It has neither depth, height, nor breadth in it; neither uncommon strength nor uncommon refinement of thought, sentiment, or language: it has no originality."

Now, it must be obvious to every one that the thing to which this description applies, lacks all the essentials of poetry; is in fact no poetry at all. You may say anything else you please of it; when you have said this much, you have said enough to exclude it from the domain of poetry. This is exactly the sort of stuff that is sure to become popular at the present day, when the popularity of a thing increases in proportion to its nothingness. A parallel this for the "lucus a non lucendo." The more a man's poetry deserves to be unpopular, the more popular it is; and to predicate of anything that it has neither depth, nor height, nor breadth, nor strength, nor refinement, nor originality, is to enhance its claims to public approbation. Had Hazlitt applied this description to Crabbe's poetry, he would not have been very wide of the mark; but to reduce Scott's splendid creations to this level of blankness and nonentity, and say at the same time that they *deserve to be popular*, is paradoxical in the highest degree.

PLAGIARISM.

"Fine words, I wonder where you stole 'em."

SWIFT.

PLAGIARISM.

As the word "Plagiarism" is often misapplied, it may be as well to explain, at the outset, in what sense it should be understood.

One writer appropriates the *work* of another, in the form in which he finds it, giving it to the world in his own name, and as his own production. Here the term "plagiarism" is inadequate to describe the offence; and by universal consent, the writer who is guilty of such wholesale appropriation, is deemed no better than a thief.

Another writer borrows the *subject* of his work, moulding it, both as to form and language, in a fashion peculiarly his own. Of this species of borrowing, instances will be found in writers even of the highest genius. But as themes and subjects are held to be common property, no one is accounted a plagiarist for the mere adoption of a subject or theme which has been handled by another.

A third writer appropriates the *thoughts* or

images, which are the mental property of another; and this is what is commonly called "plagiarism." To constitute such, however, it is necessary that the borrowed thought or image should be a striking one, and be peculiar to the writer from whom it is adopted. Plagiarism of this kind has been more or less prevalent in all ages; and it has become so common among the moderns, that there is scarcely an author of any distinction whose works do not contain some examples of it. The learned reader who, by the light of a detective memory, shall carefully peruse the Greek, Latin, and French classics; and then run over our English poets, from Chaucer to Tennyson, shall meet with some hundreds of borrowed thoughts, which, so far as I know, have never been noticed by any commentator.

The imputation of "plagiarism," however, is one of a grave nature, and should never be made upon slight or insufficient grounds. Apart from the charge of dishonesty which it implies, it detracts by so much from the originality and merit of the writer against whom it is thrown out. From that character, therefore, we must except, first, everything that may be fairly presumed to be a coincidence, whenever the difficulty of distinguishing between intentional borrowings and accidental resemblances can be got over; secondly, common-place thoughts and sentiments, which, being the current coin of the intellectual realm,

are alike palpable to all; thirdly, single words and expressions which in themselves convey no image or sentiment, but what will be found attached to them, by any one who can turn over the leaves of a dictionary.

Originality, the opposite of plagiarism, is of various kinds, and may be evinced either in the choice of the theme, the mode of treating it, or the language with which it is embellished. An author may be totally free from plagiarism, and yet be totally destitute of originality; and he may, on the other hand, be a frequent plagiarist, and exhibit in other respects undoubted originality.

Plagiarism is a subject which has seldom engaged the attention of the literary historian. In this, as in other fields of investigation, the Germans have laboured with success; but it is chiefly to the French, so remarkable for method and lucidity in their treatment of literary questions, that we are indebted for the information we possess on this subject. Their contributions on "Plagiarism" are not only the most recent, but the most valuable; while the writings of Nodier and Quérard contain some of the most startling revelations that have yet been given to the world. For instance, Montaigne is shown to have borrowed much from Seneca and Plutarch; and what he has copied without acknowledgment from them, Charron and Corneille have adopted in the same

unscrupulous manner from him. Thus, too, Rabelais' eccentricities are proved to have furnished many a lively scene to Racine and Molière, and many an ingenious fable to La Fontaine; while Pascal, who is generally reckoned one of the most original thinkers of the seventeenth century, is described as surpassing all others by his daring feats of plagiarism. In a single chapter of his "Pensées," Nodier has pointed out seven or eight instances of this species of theft; and for further examples, he invites the curious reader to a comparison of the "Pensées" with the "Essays" of Montaigne.

The Chevalier Ramsay, author of "Les Voyages de Cyrus," is cited as another notable plagiarist. "His master, Fenelon," says Voltaire, "had published the Travels of Telemachus; and Ramsay could do no less than follow his example. He does not stop, however, at a cold imitation, but literally copies the language both of Fenelon and of Bossuet. When the chevalier was taken to task for this, his reply was: 'Qu'on pouvait se rencontrer; qu'il n'était pas étonnant qu'il pensât comme Fénélon, et qu'il s'exprimât comme Bossuet.'"

If Voltaire's forwardness in exposing the plagiarisms of others was intended to remove from himself all suspicion of similar practices, it failed of success. Nodier, in his valuable work, "Questions de Littérature Légale," quotes several

instances of plagiarism in Voltaire, and especially in his romance of "Zadig." Fréron, too, in the "Année Littéraire," 1767, describes a whole chapter in this romance as copied from "Les Voyages et Aventures de trois Princes de Sarrendip," a work translated from the Italian, and published at Paris in 1719; and the same writer has shown that Voltaire's "Episode de l'Ermite" is adopted from Parnel's poem of "The Hermit."

J.-J. Rousseau, Voltaire's great contemporary and rival, presents a parallel case. He reproaches Mably with having borrowed, without acknowledgment, his philosophical systems; and the Benedictine, Don Joseph Cajot, brings a charge of plagiarism against Rousseau's "Emile." Nor is this all: the Abbé Du Laurens, known as the author of "Compère Mathieu," in a work published in 1788, asserts that Rousseau copied his "Contrat Social," word for word, from Ulric Huber's Latin work, "De Jure Civitatis Libri III." "We shall be told," adds Du Laurens, "that M. Rousseau, like a second Prometheus, stole the sacred fire from heaven: our answer is, that he stole his fire, not from heaven, but from a library."

Among the plagiarists of less note (cited by Quérard) may be named M. Langlès, the orientalist, stealing his "Voyage d'Abdoul Rizzac" from Galland's "Arabian Nights;" M. Lefebre de Villebrune, in his translation of Athenæus,

copying six thousand two hundred notes from Casaubon's critical works; De Saint-Ange, in his translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," borrowing about fifteen hundred verses from Thomas Corneille, and a still greater number from Malfillatre; Jacques Delille, in his translation of Virgil, his poem of "L'Imagination," and other works, appropriating a great number of lines from other poets; Malte-Brun, in his famous work on Geography, literally adopting the remarks of Gosselin, Lacroix, Walckenaer, Pinkerton, Puissant, &c.; Aignan, in his translation of the "Iliad," borrowing twelve hundred verses from a previous translation by Rochefort; Castil Blaze transferring to his "Dictionary of Modern Music" three hundred and forty notices from Rousseau's work on the same subject, and, all the while, abusing the latter for his ignorance of the principles of the art; Henri Beyle, under the assumed name of Bombet, publishing his well-known "Letters" on Haydn and Italian Music, and leaving the public unacquainted with the fact that he had merely translated them from the Italian of Joseph Carpani; and lastly, the Count de Courchamps palming on the world, as the "Mémoires inédits de Cagliostro," a series of tales which turned out, after all, to be but a literal transcript of a romance published some twenty years before, by John Potocki, a Polish count.

These notices of plagiarism bring us down to our own times, and to the most audacious plagiarist of any time or country, M. Alexandre Dumas, Marquis de la Pailleterie. Until recent years, plagiarism was reckoned a discreditable practice, and every means was resorted to, in order to disguise or palliate the offence. Some writers, on finding that their good things had been anticipated, were content to say with Terence: "Nullum est jam dictum quod non sit dictum priùs;" or, as La Bruyère has it, "Tout est dit." Others may have exclaimed with Donatus: "Pereant illi qui, ante nos, nostra dixerunt!" Others, like the Chevalier de Cailly, may have taken a philosophical view of the matter, and in a happy vein of badinage, laughed at the pretensions of those who went before them:—

"Dis-je quelque chose d'assez belle?
L'Antiquité, toute en cervelle,
Prétend l'avoir dit avant moi:
C'est une plaisante donzelle!
Que ne venait-elle après moi;
J'aurais dit la chose avant elle."

Others, again, like Richesource, may have instituted schools of plagiarism, in which the "art" was cultivated in all its details. Indeed, the very title of the work, published by this "Professor of Plagiarism," shows that concealment was a principal feature of the new science. "Le

Masque des Orateurs, ou la Manière de déguiser toutes sortes de Compositions, Lettres, Sermons, Panégyriques, Oraisons funèbres, Dédicaces, Discours, &c.," which made its appearance in 1667, inculcated, above all things, the necessity of concealing the literary theft; and this was to be done in so adroit a manner that the plundered author should find it impossible to recognize his own work, or even his own style.

But it was reserved for the nineteenth century, and for Alexandre Dumas, not only to practise this infamous "art," but to claim a place for it among the rights and prerogatives of genius. His words deserve to be quoted:—

"The man of genius does not steal; he conquers: and what he conquers, he annexes to his empire. He makes laws for it, peoples it with his subjects, and extends his golden sceptre over it. And where is the man who, on surveying his beautiful kingdom, shall dare to assert that this or that piece of land is no part of his property?"

M. Dumas descants in the same magniloquent strain upon Napoleon's conquests, wishing it to be understood that he is himself—

"The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme."

At all events, he finds consolation in the thought that Shakspeare and Molière were subjected to similar charges of plagiarism, and that their detractors are now forgotten. He seems not to know, however, that there is a vast difference between him and those great men, whom he

would offer to the world as his prototypes. They, indeed, were men of genius, while he is little better than "un habile arrangeur de la pensée d'autrui."

It would be tedious to detail the numerous plagiarisms that have been detected in the writings of this author. The curious reader will find them amply and amusingly described in Quérard's "Supercheries Littéraires." Suffice it to say that he has made a trade of literature, and contributed more than any other writer, ancient or modern, to degrade that ennobling pursuit to the level of the vilest day-drudgery.

I believe there is no work in English Literature that treats of "Plagiarism" as a separate subject; our researches, in this matter, being confined to the casual and somewhat desultory remarks of critics and reviewers. This is a deficiency which I am by no means in a position to supply. By collecting, however, such scattered instances as have been quoted by other writers, together with the numerous examples which I have detected myself, I shall furnish a slight, and, I trust, not wholly uninteresting contribution on this subject. From our elder poets it were easy to adduce instances of literary borrowings; but my business is chiefly with the moderns; and by way of introduction, I shall begin with Pope.

The great popularity of Pope's poetry, and the

vividness with which his couplets are impressed on the memory, enable his readers to detect, with comparative facility, any resemblance that may exist between his thoughts and expressions and those of other poets. The following are some of the instances that occur in his "Essay on Man:"—

> "Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
> And catch the manners living as they rise;
> Laugh when we must, be candid when we can,
> And vindicate the ways of God to man."

The first line of this is taken from Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel:"—

> "While he with watchful eye
> Observes and shoots their treasons as they fly."

The last is borrowed from this passage in Milton:—

> "That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men."

The following sample, also from the "Essay on Man,"—

> "Form'd by thy converse happily to steer
> From grave to gay, from lively to severe,"

is adopted from a couplet in Boileau's "Art Poétique:"—

> "Heureux qui, dans ses vers, sait d'une voix légère,
> Passer du grave au doux, du plaisant au sévère."

Then we have that remarkable passage, for

which so much encomium has been bestowed on Pope, but which is copied nearly verbatim from Pascal. The lines in Pope are :—

> " Chaos of thought and passion all confused,
> Still by himself abused or disabused,
> Created half to rise and half to fall ;
> Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all ;
> Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd,
> The glory, jest, and riddle of the world."

The passage in Pascal is as follows :—

" Quelle chimère est-ce donc que l'homme ! quelle nouveauté, quel chaos, quel sujet de contradiction ! Juge de toutes choses, imbécile ver de terre, dépositaire du vrai, amas d'incertitude, gloire et rebut de l'univers ! "

Next we have the couplet :—

> " Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
> As, to be hated, needs but to be seen."

Of which Archbishop Leighton furnishes the original in the following passage :—

" Were the true visage of sin seen at a full light, undressed and unpainted, it were impossible, while it so appeared, that any one soul could be in love with it, but would rather flee from it as hideous and abominable."—*Works.*

Another line in the " Essay on Man" has a parallel in one of Savage's poems. Pope has it :—

> " Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
> See Cromwell damn'd to everlasting fame."

And Savage, thus :—

> " May see thee now, tho' late, redeem thy name,
> And glorify what else is damn'd to fame."

And, after him, Lloyd, in one of his "Epistles:"—

"Damn'd by the muse to everlasting fame."

There are few ancient writers that have been so unceremoniously purloined as Seneca. From him Dryden has adopted the first line of the well-known couplet:—

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

And from Dryden, Pope has transferred the last line to his "Essay on Man," thus:—

"What thin partitions sense from thought divide."

In the same poem occurs the couplet:—

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

The second line of which is copied from Cowley:—

"His faith, perhaps, in some nice tenets might
Be wrong; his life, I'm sure, was in the right."

And Cowley found the germ of the thought in Lord Herbert's remark:—

"Quod credis nihil est, sit modo vita proba."

Then we have the famous apothegm:—

"The proper study of mankind is man."

Which is borrowed from this sentence in Pascal's "Pensées:"—

"J'ai cru trouver bien des compagnons dans l'étude de l'homme, puisque c'est celle qui lui est propre."

And Pascal adopted it from a passage in Charron's "De la Sagesse," where he says:—

"La vraye science et la vraye étude de l'homme c'est l'homme."

The origin of the thought, however, is assigned to no less an authority than Socrates, of whom Xenophon says:—

"Man, and what related to man, were the only subjects on which he chose to employ himself."

I may remark in passing, that there is a limited sense in which this sentiment, notwithstanding the sanction of the great names just cited, would be little better than a fallacy. Such would be the case, if man, as man's "proper study," were considered solely with reference to his terrestrial career. In this sense the sentiment would be unworthy of the wisdom and aspirations of even a heathen philosopher. According to our Christian notions of the business of life, no study of mankind can be deemed *proper*, that should exclude the consideration of man's immortal destiny; and it is, doubtless, in this sense that Xenophon's words, "man, and what *related* to man," must be understood. Seneca, another heathen, furnishes an appropriate comment upon this view of the matter, where he exclaims:—

"O quam contempta res est homo, nisi *super humana* se erexerit!"

This too has been adopted by some of our poets. Daniel has it in the lines :—

> "Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how vain a thing is man!"

And Denham in "The Sophy :"—

> "Man to himself
> Is a large prospect, raised above the level
> Of his own creeping thoughts."

Every reader of Pope must have been struck with that beautiful simile in the "Essay on Criticism," by which he attempts to illustrate the growing labours of science and learning, concluding with the line :—

> "Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

"Dr. Johnson," says Dr. Croly, "has lavished panegyric on this simile as being the most apt, the most proper, and the most sublime of any in the English language; while the simile, and, of course, the panegyric, belong to Drummond :"—

> "All as a pilgrim who the Alps doth passe,
> * * * * * *
> Till mounting some tall mountaine he doth finde
> More heights before him than he left behinde."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, too, has adopted this simile in "Emile :"—

"On les verra semblables à ces voyageurs inexpérimentés, qui, s'engageant pour la première fois dans les Alpes, pensent les franchir à chaque montagne; et quand ils sont au sommet, trouvent avec découragement de plus hautes montagnes au devant d'eux."

And Sir Walter Scott in the following passage:—

"He was like the adventurous climber of the Alps, to whom the surmounting the most tremendous precipices and ascending to the most towering peaks, only shows yet dizzier heights and higher points of elevation."—*Life of Napoleon.*

Again, in the "Essay on Criticism" we have the couplet:—

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring."

The truth of which has been controverted in our day. It does not appear, however, to have occurred to any of the disputants that the merit of the thought, such as it is, belongs to Lord Bacon, who says in his "Essay of Atheism:"—

"A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

To this source may also be referred that beautiful couplet in Dryden:—

"Errors like straws upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls must dive below."

The next couplet in the "Essay on Criticism" also contains a borrowed thought:—

"There shallow drafts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again."

The conceit in the second line has been adopted

from Nash's classification of "Drunkards," where he describes the seventh species as

"Martin-drunk, when a man is drunk and drinks himself sober ere he stir."

I shall take a few more samples from Pope. In his "Windsor Forest" we have the couplet:—

"T' observe a mean, be to himself a friend,
To follow nature and regard his end;"

which has been appropriated from this passage in Lucan:—

"Servare modum, fidemque tenere,
Naturamque sequi."

Add the following, in "Eloisa to Abelard:"—

"One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight;
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight."

The last line of which has been copied from Smith's "Hippolytus and Phædra:"—

"Priests, tapers, temples, swam before my sight."

In the same poem are the impassioned lines:—

"See my lips tremble and my eyeballs roll;
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying soul;"

which are adopted from Oldham's "Death of Adonis:"—

"Kiss while I watch thy swimming eyeballs roll;
Watch thy last gasp, and catch thy flying soul."

The principal thought, however, may be traced to Dryden's tragedy of "Don Sebastian:"—

> "How can we better die than close embraced,
> Sucking each other's soul while we expire?"

or, perhaps, more correctly to Marlow's "Tragical History of Dr. Faustus:"—

> "Sweet Helen! make me immortal with a kiss!
> Her lips sucke forth my soule: see where it flies."

Not the least noticeable of Pope's imitations is his Ode of the "Dying Christian to his Soul." Here are the first two stanzas:—

> "Vital spark of heavenly flame,
> Quit, O quit this mortal frame!
> Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
> O the pain, the bliss of dying!
> Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
> And let me languish into life.
>
> "Hark! they whisper; Angels say:
> 'Sister spirit, come away!'
> What is this absorbs me quite,
> Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
> Drowns my spirits, draws my breath:
> Tell me, my soul, can this be death?"

Pope admits that when he wrote these lines he had in his head not only the Emperor Hadrian's verses to his departing soul:—

> "Animula, vagula, blandula,
> Hospes, comesque corporis;
> Quæ nunc abibis in loca?
> Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
> Nec, ut soles, dabis joca,"—

but also the beautiful fragment of Sappho, of which the concluding stanzas are thus elegantly translated by Philips :—

> " My bosom glow'd, the subtle flame
> Ran quick thro' all my vital frame;
> O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung;
> My ears with hollow murmurs rung.
>
> " In dewy damps my limbs were chill'd:
> My blood with gentle horrors thrill'd;
> My feeble pulse forgot to play,
> I fainted, sunk, and died away."

In addition to these sources of inspiration, Pope seems to have had in his eye the following lines by Flatman :—

> " When on my sick bed I languish,
> Full of sorrow, full of anguish,
> Fainting, gasping, trembling, crying,
> Panting, groaning, speechless, dying,
> Methinks I hear some gentle spirit say:
> ' Be not fearful, come away.' "

Pope's " Pastorals " also contain some borrowed thoughts. The line,—

> " A shepherd boy (he seeks no better name),"

is copied from this in Spenser :—

> " A shepherd boy (no better do him call)."

So of the couplet :—

> " While labouring oxen, spent with toil and heat,
> In their loose traces from the field retreat;"

which has been appropriated from Milton's "Comus:"—

> "Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox
> In his loose traces from the furrow came."

Another thought in Milton's "Paradise Lost,"—

> "At whose sight all the stars
> Hide their diminish'd heads,"

has been transferred by Pope to one of his "Moral Essays:"—

> "Ye little stars, hide your diminish'd rays."

Before we take leave of Pope, it is but right that we should restore to him the original thought of a Latin hexameter, which is commonly ascribed to Horace. We allude to the oft-quoted:—

> "Indocti discant et ament meminisse periti;"

the history of which is given in an interesting little volume by M. Edouard Fournier, entitled, "L'Esprit des Autres."

This verse appeared for the first time as an epigraph to President Henault's "Abrégé Chronologique;" and it was much admired both for its appositeness and its Horatian elegance. For some time the good president chuckled in secret at the blundering and want of memory of the admirers of Horace. In 1749, however, on the

appearance of the third edition of his work, he took occasion to state in the Preface that the much-admired epigraph was not written by Horace, but by himself; and that he had given it as a translation of the following couplet in Pope's "Essay on Criticism:"—

> "Content if hence th' unlearn'd their wants may view,
> The learn'd reflect on what before they knew."

This revelation took the critics by surprise. Henault's claim, however, was soon forgotten; and to this day, whenever the hexameter is quoted, as it frequently is on the title-page of works on education, to Horace, and not to Henault, is the merit of it invariably assigned. And thus it comes to pass that the poor rhymster's mite, which constitutes his whole riches, is swallowed up by the literary Crœsus.

Considering the slender productions of his muse, there is no English poet whose versified maxims are so often quoted as those of Gray:—

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

"Thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

"His hoary hair stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air."

"The still small voice of gratitude."

"And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

"Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind."

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

These, and many others of like significance, are in everybody's mouth. But, as generally happens, the more beautiful the thought, the more likely it is to have been borrowed. Gray's most remarkable poem, the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," is said to have been picked out, thought by thought, if not word by word, from other poets. The very first line,—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,"

has been adopted from the following passage in Dante's "Purgatory:"—

"Se ode squilla di lontano
Che paja 'l giorno pianger che si muore."

Giannini has translated the Elegy into Italian; and it is worthy of notice that his version of the first line coincides with Dante's words:—

"Piange la squilla 'l giorno, che si muore."

The principal thought in Dante, the "giorno che si muore," is further traceable to Statius's

"Jam moriente die."

One of the finest stanzas in the Elegy is but a free translation of the Latin couplet:—

"Plurima gemma latet cæca tellure sepulta;
Plurima neglecto fragrat odore rosa."

Gray's lines are:—

"Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Bishop Hall has a parallel to the first two lines:—

"There is many a rich stone laid up in the bowels of the earth, many a fair pearl in the bosom of the sea, that never was seen, nor ever will be."

The last line occurs in the same words in Churchill:—

"Nor waste their sweetness in the desert air."

And also in Lloyd:—

"Which else had wasted in the desert air."

Another borrowed stanza in the Elegy is the following:—

"For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share."

This is adopted from Lucretius:—

"At jam non domus accipiet te læta; neque uxor
Optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
Prærripere, et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent."

Gray's appropriations are not confined to the Elegy. In his "Ode to Vicissitude," he has the following:—

"The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sober tints of woe;
And, blended, form with artful strife
The strength and harmony of life."

The last two lines are taken from Pope's "Essay on Man:"—

> "The lights and shades whose well-accorded strife
> Gives all the strength and colour of our life."

Then we have the couplet in the "Fatal Sisters:"—

> "Iron sleet, of arrowy shower,
> Hurtles in the darken'd air."

Which is adopted from this passage in "Paradise Regained:"—

> "How quick they wheel'd, and, flying, behind them shot
> Sharp sleet of arrowy shower."

Next comes the line in "The Bard:"—

> "Give ample room and verge enough."

Which is taken from a passage in Dryden's "Don Sebastian:"—

> "Let fortune empty her whole quiver on me!
> I have a soul that, like an ample shield,
> Can take in all, and verge enough for more."

In the same poem we have the comparison of the "streaming meteor;" but whether borrowed from Cowley or from Milton, seems uncertain. Cowley, speaking of the Angel Gabriel, says:—

> "An harmless flaming meteor shone for haire,
> And fell adown his shoulders with loose care."

And Milton, in "Paradise Lost:"—

> "Th' imperial ensign, which full high advanced,
> Shone like a meteor, streaming to the wind."

Gray has it:—

> "With haggard eyes the poet stood;
> Loose his beard and hoary hair
> Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air."

Campbell, in his "Pleasures of Hope," has also borrowed this simile:—

> "Where Andes, giant of the western star,
> With meteor standard to the winds unfurl'd."

Another appropriation in Gray is the well-known apothegm at the close of the following lines, in his "Ode on a Prospect of Eton College:"—

> "Yet ah! why should they know their fate,
> Since sorrow never comes too late,
> And happiness too swiftly flies.
> * * * * * *
> * * * where ignorance is bliss
> 'Tis folly to be wise."

Davenant has the same idea in the lines:—

> "Then ask not bodies doom'd to die
> To what abode they go;
> Since knowledge is but sorrow's spy,
> 'Tis better not to know."

But it is still more obviously assignable to Prior:—

> "Seeing aright we see our woes,
> Then what avails us to have eyes?
> From ignorance our comfort flows,
> The only wretched are the wise."

The true source, after all, of this thought, as indeed of all human wisdom, must be traced to a higher authority than any poet, ancient or modern. Ecclesiastes, i. 18, expresses it in fewer words than any author that has been quoted :—

> " He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

To Milton, Gray is indebted for another of his beautiful images. The former, speaking of the Deity, says :—

> " Dark with excessive light thy skirts appear."

And Gray, with true poetic feeling, has applied this image to Milton himself, in those forceful lines in the " Progress of Poesy," in which he alludes to the poet's blindness :—

> " The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
> Where angels tremble while they gaze,
> He saw ; but blasted with excess of light,
> Closed his eyes in endless night."

Shelley has imitated this in the following lines in " Julian and Maddalo :"—

> " The sense that he was greater than his kind
> Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind,
> By gazing on its own exceeding light."

There is a passage in Longinus which appears to have furnished Milton with the germ of this thought. The Greek rhetorician is commenting on the use of figurative language, and after

illustrating his views by a quotation from Demosthenes, he adds :—

"Τίνι γὰρ ἐνταῦθ' ὁ ῥήτωρ ἀπέκρυψε τὸ σχῆμα; δῆλον, ὅτι τῷ φωτὶ αὐτῷ."

"In what has the orator here concealed the figure? plainly, in its own lustre."

In this passage Longinus elucidates one figure by another; a not unfrequent practice with that elegant writer.

Lastly, we have the quatrain in Gray's "Ode to Adversity :"—

> "Daughter of Jove, relentless power,
> Thou tamer of the human breast,
> Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour
> The bad affright, afflict the best."

For the third line of which he is indebted to this passage in "Paradise Lost :"—

> When the scourge
> Inexorably and the torturing hour
> Calls us to penance."

If any work more than another might be expected to furnish information on the subject of "plagiarism," it is D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature." Yet, although the subject is there introduced under the head of "Richesource and his Professorship," not a single example is adduced of so remarkable a "Curiosity." This is not a little surprising in a writer who appears to have bestowed so much industry and patience

on his other researches. True, we find farther on some twenty-five pages of "Imitations," and "Similarities;" but one half of these have no better claim to that distinction than the trivial coincidence of a single word or epithet; a claim which, if strictly enforced, would exhibit all the poetry in our language as made up of similarities. There are, however, three of the "Imitations" which deserve to be quoted.

The first occurs in Pope's "Prologue to the Satires," where, speaking of Dr. Arbuthnot, he says:—

> "Friend of my life (which did not you prolong,
> The world had wanted many an idle song)."

The thought in the second line being adopted from this couplet in Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel:"—

> "David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
> And Heaven had wanted one immortal song."

The second imitation refers to a couplet in Young:—

> "Of some for glory such the boundless rage,
> That they're the blackest scandal of the age."

Which is taken from the following in Oldham's "Satire against Poetry:"—

> "On Butler who can think without just rage?
> The glory and the scandal of the age."

The third imitation noticed by D'Israeli,

occurs in a couplet in Goldsmith's "Deserted Village:"—

> "Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made."

The second line of which he traces to a passage in De Caux, who, comparing the world to his hour-glass, says:—

> "C'est un verre qui luit,
> Qu'un souffle peut détruire, et qu'un souffle a produit."

The following quatrain, commemorating the devastating effects of an earthquake in the valley of Lucerne, in 1808, offers a parallel:—

> "O ciel! ainsi ta Providence
> A tous les maux nous condamna;
> Un souffle éteint notre existence,
> Comme un souffle nous la donna."

And Pope has a couplet in which the same turn of thought is preserved:—

> "Who pants for glory finds but short repose;
> A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows."

There is a plagiarism in Goldsmith which, I believe, was first pointed out by the "Athenæum" newspaper. It relates to this couplet in the "Haunch of Venison:"—

> "Such dainties to them their health it might hurt;
> It's like sending them ruffles when wanting a shirt."

The second line of which belongs to the following passage in "Tom Brown:"—

"If your friend is in want, don't carry him to the tavern, where you treat yourself as well as him, and entail a thirst and headache upon him next morning. To treat a poor wretch with a bottle of Burgundy and fill his snuff-box, is like giving a pair of laced ruffles to a man that has never a shirt on his back. Put something in his pocket."

But the most remarkable plagiarism in Goldsmith is his "Elegy on Mrs. Mary Blaze." That delightful poet tells us that during his pedestrian tour through France, he procured a subsistence by playing some of his most merry tunes on the German flute; and it is natural to suppose that the sprightly peasants whom he thus entertained, requited his skill by singing or reciting some of their popular songs. Among those most in vogue at that period was the "Chanson sur le fameux La Palisse," which is generally attributed to Bernard de la Monnoye. To such of my countrymen as may still retain any feeling of soreness on the score of "Malbrough s'en va-ten guerre," it may be some consolation to know that before the latter *facétie* was composed on the renowned English captain, the French had already indulged their sarcastic playfulness at the expense of one of their own great captains, the famous La Palisse, "Grand Maréchal de France," the Marlborough of his age, and the friend and companion in arms of Francis the First. Some of

the stanzas in "Monsieur La Palisse" are pointless enough; but there are others pregnant with humour, and it is these which Goldsmith has appropriated. To facilitate a comparison, I shall give a stanza from each, alternately:—

"On ne le vit jamais las
Ni sujet à la paresse;
Tandis qu'il ne dormait pas,
On tient qu'il veillait sans cesse."

"At church in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumber'd in her pew,
But when she shut her eyes."

"On dit que dans ses amours
Il fut caressé des belles,
Qui le suivirent toujours,
Tant qu'il marcha devant elles."

"Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux and more:
The king himself has follow'd her,
When she has walk'd before."

"Il fut par un triste sort
Blessé d'une main cruelle;
On croit, puisqu'il en est mort,
Que la plaie était mortelle."

"But now her wealth and finery fled,
Her hangers-on cut short all;
The doctors found when she was dead,
Her last disorder mortal."

"Il mourut le vendredi,
Le dernier jour de son âge;
S'il fut mort le samedi,
Il eut vecu davantage."

"Let us lament in sorrow sore,
For Kent Street well may say,
That, had she lived a twelvemonth more,
She had not died to-day."

In Goldsmith's "Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog," written in a similar strain of conceit, there is a stanza taken from "Monsieur La Palisse:"—

"Bien instruit dès le berceau,
Jamais, tant il fut honnête,
Il ne mettait son chapeau,
Qu'il ne se couvrit la tête."

"A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad,
When he put on his clothes."

Then we have the epitaph on Edward Purdon:—

"Here lies poor Ned Purdon, from misery freed,
Who long was a bookseller's hack;
He led such a damnable life in this world,
I don't think he'll wish to come back."

Which Goldsmith has copied from this of the Chevalier de Cailly:—

"Il est au bout de ses travaux,
Il a passé le Sieur Etienne;
En ce monde il eut tant de maux,
Qu'on ne croit pas qu'il revienne."

Pope too has imitated this in the Epitaph:—

"Well then, poor G—— lies underground,
So there's an end of honest Jack:
So little justice here he found,
'Tis ten to one he'll ne'er come back."

To these may be added the well-known lines in the "Hermit:"—

> "Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long."

Which have their parallel in Young's fourth *Night*:—

> "Man wants but little, nor that little long."

It has been asserted that Goldsmith was indebted for his beautiful ballad of the "Hermit" to Percy's ballad of the "Friars of Orders Gray;" but the truth seems to be that Percy, not Goldsmith, was the borrower. Percy, while collecting his "Reliques," showed Goldsmith the manuscript of the old ballad of the "Gentle Herdsman," and from this Goldsmith took the hint of his "Hermit." Having finished his poem, Goldsmith, in his turn, read it to Percy, who took from it the plan of his "Friars of Orders Gray," adopting not only the style and incidents, but in many places the very words of Goldsmith's delightful little poem—all, in fact, but its inimitable simplicity and pathos. (See Boswell's "Life of Johnson.")

Dr. Young has a passage in which he describes man as—

> "Midway from nothing to the Deity."

For this he is indebted to Pascal's remark:—

> "Qu'est-ce que l'homme dans la nature? un néant à l'égard de l'infini; un tout à l'égard du néant; un milieu entre rien et tout."

The following lines present another sample:—

"Our birth is nothing but our death begun,
And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb;
Lamented, or lamenting, all one lot."

The original of which Young found in this passage in one of Bishop Hall's "Epistles:"—

"Death borders upon our birth, and our cradle stands in the grave. We lament the loss of our parents; how soon shall our sons bewail us?"

J.-B. Rousseau has the principal thought in one of his "Odes:"—

"Le premier moment de la vie
Est le premier pas vers la mort."

Then we have the lines:—

"Woes cluster; rare are solitary woes;
They love a train; they tread each other's heels."

Of which Young found the original in "Hamlet:"—

"One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow;"

or, as Herrick has it in his "Hesperides:"—

"Thus woe succeeds a woe, as wave a wave."

Another appropriation in Young is the line:—

"The course of Nature is the art of God;"

which is taken from Brown's "Religio Medici:"—

"In brief, all things are artificial; for Nature is the art of God."

Thomson, in his "Castle of Indolence," has the line:—

"As thick as idle motes in sunny ray;"

which has its parallel in Milton's "Il Penseroso:"—

"As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams."

And Milton has taken the simile from this of Chaucer:—

"As thick as motes in the sunne beams."

There is a well-known epigram in Pope:—

"You beat your pate and fancy wit will come:
Knock as you please, there's nobody at home."

Which Cowper has adopted, in nearly the same words, in his poem on "Conversation:"—

"His wit invites you by his looks to come;
But when you knock, it never is at home."

The following sample is from the same poem:—

"The solemn fop, significant and budge,
A fool with judges, among fools a judge."

The sentiment, however, has so many parallels among the ancients, that it is uncertain from which of them Cowper has adopted it. Plato has it in the sentence:—

"Ο δὲ Κριτιὰς . . . . . ἐκαλεῖτο ἰδιώτης μὲν ἐν φιλοσόφοις, φιλόσοφος δὲ ἐν ἰδιώταις."

It occurs in Seneca in the following form :—

"Sparsum memini hominem, inter scholasticos insanum, inter sanos scholasticum."

Apuleius has it in the words :—

"Inter doctos nobilissimus, inter nobiles doctissimus, inter utrosque optimus."

And St. Jerome, in his remarks on the Prætorian Prefect Dardanus, whom he describes as,—

"Christianorum nobilissime, nobilium christianissime."

To which may be added this of Sir Walter Scott :—

"It was in this sphere that Napoleon was seen to greatest advantage; for, although too much of a soldier among sovereigns, no one could claim with better right to be a sovereign among soldiers."—*Life of Napoleon.*

A noted instance of this antithesis is Dr. Johnson's sarcastic application of it to Lord Chesterfield :—

"This man, I thought, had been a lord among wits, but I find he is only a wit among lords."

The oft-quoted line in Cowper's "Task,"—

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,"

is taken from this passage in Churchill's "Farewell :"—

"Be England what she will,
With all her faults, she is my country still."

In his "Table Talk" Cowper has the couplet:—

> "That constellation set, the world in vain
> Must hope to look upon their like again;"

which is adopted from the following in "Hamlet:"—

> "He was a man, take him for all in all,
> I shall not look upon his like again."

From "Hamlet," too, Churchill has borrowed the second line in this couplet:—

> "And the poor slattern muse is brought to bed,
> With all her imperfections on her head."

Shakspeare's words are:—

> "No reckoning made, but sent to my account,
> With all my imperfections on my head."

Another remarkable thought in the "Task,"—

> "God made the country, and man made the town,"

is supposed to have been adopted from this line in Cowley's "Garden:"—

> "God the first garden made, the first city Cain."

But the true source of it will be found in a passage in Varro's "De Re Rusticâ," where he says:—

> "Nec mirum quod divina natura dedit agros, ars humana ædificavit urbes."

The temptation of borrowing must be strong indeed, when we meet with such a poet as

Chatterton giving way to it, notwithstanding the still stronger inducement which should have deterred *him* from venturing on such forbidden ground. But so it is; and among the many reasons for rejecting the authenticity of the "Rowley Poems," not the least cogent is the occurrence therein of borrowed thoughts—borrowed from poets of a date posterior to that of their pretended origin. Of these I shall quote two or three instances. In the "Battle of Hastings" we read this couplet:—

> "The grey-goose pynion that thereon was sett,
> Eftsoons wyth smokyng crymson bloud was wett."

This is taken from the ballad of "Chevy Chase:"—

> "The grey-goose wing that was thereon
> In his heart's blood was wet."

In the same poem Chatterton has the lines:—

> "Edardus felle upon the bloudie grounde;
> His noble soule came rushyng from the wounde."

The last of which, with "disdainful" instead of "noble," is the concluding line in Dryden's translation of Virgil:—

> "And the disdainful soul came rushing through the wound."

The same origin must be assigned to the following couplet in Sir Richard Blackmore; for, although Dryden's contemporary, Sir Richard

is more likely to have been the borrower on this occasion:—

> "A gloomy night o'erwhelms his dying eyes,
> And his disdainful soul from his pale bosom flies."

There is a plagiarism in Chatterton which has escaped the notice of his numerous annotators, and which furnishes additional proof, if any were wanting, that the "Rowley Poems" are in reality the production of that "marvellous boy." It occurs at the commencement of the "Tournament," in the line,—

> "The worlde bie diffraunce ys ynn orderr founde."

It will be seen that this line, a very remarkable one, has been cleverly condensed from a passage in Pope's "Windsor Forest:"—

> "But as the *world*, harmoniously confused,
> Where *order* in variety we see,
> And where, though all things *differ*, all agree."

This sentiment has been repeated by other modern writers. Pope himself has it in the "Essay on Man," in this form:—

> "The lights and shades, whose well-accorded strife
> Gives all the strength and colour of our life."

It occurs in one of Pascal's "Pensées:"—

"J'écrirai ici mes pensées sans ordre, et non pas peut-être dans une confusion sans dessein. C'est le véritable ordre, et qui marquera toujours mon objet par le désordre même."

Bernardin de St. Pierre has it in his "Etudes de la Nature:"—

"C'est des contraires que résulte l'harmonie du monde."

And Burke, in nearly the same words, in his "Reflections on the French Revolution:—

"You had that action and counteraction which in the natural and the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe."

Nor does the sentiment belong exclusively to the moderns. I find it in Horace's twelfth "Epistle:"—

"Nil parvum sapias, et adhuc sublimia cures,
* * * * * *
Quid velit et possit rerum concordia discors."

Lucan, I think, has the same expression in his "Pharsalia;" and it forms the basis of Longinus's remark on the eloquence of Demosthenes:—

"Οὐκοῦν τὴν μὲν φύσιν τῶν ἐπαναφορῶν καὶ ἀσυνδέτων πάντῃ φυλάττει τῇ συνεχεῖ μεταβολῇ· οὕτως αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ τάξις ἄτακτον, καὶ ἔμπαλιν ἡ ἀταξία ποιὰν περιλαμβάνει τάξιν."

It may be said that, as Pope adopted the thought from Horace or Lucan, so a poet of the fifteenth century (such as the supposed Rowley) might have taken it from the same sources. The supposition, however, of its having been borrowed from Pope is supported by the fact, that the line in the "Tournament" embraces not only the thought, but the very words in which Pope has expressed it.

One of the few good things in Crabbe happens to be a borrowed thought. In his "Tales of the Hall" he has the line,—

> "He tried the luxury of doing good;"

which is copied from this couplet in Garth's "Claremont:"—

> "Hard was their lodging, homely was their food,
> For all their luxury was doing good."

There is a passage in Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which has been traced to one of Butler's minor poems. Scott has it:—

> "Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
> And man below and saints above,
> For love is Heaven, and Heaven is love."

The lines in Butler are as follows:—

> "Translate to earth the joys above,
> For nothing goes to Heaven but love."

I find, however, that the true source of Scott's lines may be traced to Dryden's "Palamon and Arcite:"—

> "The power of love
> In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,
> Rules unresisted;"

or perhaps to the line in Virgil:—

> "Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus amori;"

which Dryden has thus translated:—

> "In hell, and earth, and seas, and heaven above,
> Love conquers all, and we must yield to love."

Another of Scott's appropriations is the beautiful simile in the "Lady of the Lake:"—

> "With locks flung back and lips apart,
> Like monument of Grecian art;"

for which he is indebted to these lines in Fletcher's "Purple Island:"—

> "Her sever'd lips seem'd cut in Grecian stone,
> And all behind her flaxen locks were thrown."

The palpable plagiarisms in Wordsworth are not numerous. Before you can detect a borrowed thought in a writer, you must first detect the writer's meaning; and that is not always an easy task with a poet so impenetrably shrouded in mysticism as the Bard of Rydal Mount. Some of his thoughts, however, are traceable to other sources. Among these is the much-lauded sentiment,—

> "The child is father of the man,"

which might pass for original, if Dryden had not expressed the same thing when he said, in "All for Love:"—

> "Men are but children of a larger growth;"

or, as we have it in his fable of the "Cock and the Fox:"—

> "The nurses' legends are for truth received,
> And the man dreams but what the boy believed;"

or, better still, in the last line of this passage in his "Hind and Panther:"—

> "By education most have been misled,
> So they believe, because they so were bred:
> The priest continues what the nurse began,
> And thus the child imposes on the man."

Lloyd, in one of his Epistles, has the same thought, where he says:—

> "For men, in reason's sober eyes,
> Are children but of larger size."

Wordsworth has another sample in the "Excursion:"—

> "O many are the poets that are sown
> By nature; men endow'd with highest gifts,
> The vision and the faculty divine,
> Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse;
> Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
> By circumstances to take the height,
> The measure of themselves."

This is but an amplification of a passage in one of Guarini's "Letters:"—

"O quante nobili ingegni si perdono, che riuscerebbe mirabili, se dal seguir le inchinazione loro non fossero, o da loro appetiti ò da i Padri loro sviati."

There is also in the "Excursion" the oft-quoted expression "another and the same:"—

> "By happy chance we saw
> A twofold image; on a grassy bank
> A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
> *Another and the same.*"

This is borrowed from one of Horace's "Odes:"—

> "Alme sol, curru nitido diem qui
> Promis et celas, *aliusque et idem*
> Nasceris."

Or perhaps from Bishop Hall's romance, bearing the quaint title of "Mundus alter et idem;" or more probably still, from this passage in Darwin's "Botanic Garden:"—

> "Till o'er the wreck, emerging from the storm,
> Immortal nature lifts her changeful form;
> Mounts from her funeral pyre on wings of flame,
> And soars and shines *another and the same.*"

Then we have the passage in one of Wordsworth's "Sonnets:"—

> "The feather whence the pen
> Was shaped, that traced the lives of these good men,
> Dropt from an angel's wing;"

which has been traced to the following in a sonnet by Dorothy Berry:—

> "Whose noble praise
> Deserves a quill pluckt from an angel's wing."

The same notion occurs in another Elizabethan poet, Henry Constable, who has these lines in one of his sonnets:—

> "The pen wherewith thou dost so heavenly sing,
> Made of a quill pluckt from an angel's wing."

Lord Byron, in some instances, has had the honesty to refer to the sources of his appro-

priations. There are, however, several unacknowledged samples in his poems, one of the most remarkable of which occurs in his beautiful prelude to the "Bride of Abydos:"—

"Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime;
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gull in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute?"

This seems to have been adopted from a wild air sung by Mignon in Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," the first stanza of which is as follows:—

"Know'st thou the land where the lemon-trees bloom,
Where the gold orange glows in the deep thicket's gloom,
Where a wind ever soft from the blue heaven blows,
And the groves are of laurel, and myrtle, and rose?
Know'st thou it?
Thither, O thither,
My dearest and kindest, with thee would I go."

Another plagiarism in the "Bride of Abydos," occurs in the couplet:—

"Mark, where his carnage and his conquests cease!
He makes a solitude and calls it—peace."

The second line is copied from Tacitus, where he says:—

"Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem adpellant."

Dryden, in his "Epistle to Dr. Charleton," has these remarkable lines on the aborigines of the new world:—

> "And guiltless men who danced away their time,
> Fresh as their groves and happy as their clime."

And Byron, alluding to his favourite women in the old world, has a couplet which, in sense and sound, presents a close imitation of Dryden's:—

> "Heart on her lips and soul within her eyes,
> Soft as her clime and sunny as her skies."

There is a line in Dryden which Byron has turned to account in the same fashion. In "Alexander's Feast" we read:—

> "Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain,
> Fought all his battles o'er again."

And in the fourteenth canto of "Don Juan:"—

> "The hunters fought their foxhunt o'er again."

The same may be said of a passage in Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy:"—

"And as Praxiteles did by his glass, when he saw a scurvy face in it, brake it to pieces. But, for that one, he saw as many more as bad in a moment;"

which Byron has transferred to "Childe Harold:"—

> "E'en as a broken mirror, which the glass
> In every fragment multiplies; and makes
> A thousand images of one that was,
> The same, and still the more the more it breaks."

"Childe Harold" has also the line:—

"Yes! honor decks the turf that wraps their clay;"

which is borrowed from a couplet in one of Collins's "Odes:"—

"There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay."

Again, in Byron's address to the ocean, in the same poem, occurs the line:—

"Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now;"

for which he is indebted to De Staël's "Corinne:"—

"Mais si les vaisseaux sillonnent un moment les ondes, la vague vient effacer aussitôt cette légère marque de servitude, et la mer reparaît telle qu'elle fut au premier jour de la Création."

Add the couplet in "Lara:"—

"Books, for his volume heretofore was man,
With eye more curious he appear'd to scan."

The first line of which is but another way of expressing this of Pope:—

"The proper study of mankind is man."

A second appropriation from Burton will be found in the last line of the "Corsair:"—

"He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Link'd with one virtue and a thousand crimes;"

which is taken from the Latin quotation in the following passage in Burton:—

"Hannibal, as he had mighty virtues, so he had many vices;

unam virtutem mille vitia comitantur; as Machiavel said of Cosmo de Medici, he had two distinct persons in him."—*Anatomy of Melancholy.*

There are, in "Don Juan," two passages which Byron has adopted from La Rochefoucauld's "Maxims." The first is as follows:—

"In her first passion woman loves her lover;
In all the others all she loves is love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over,
And fits her loosely—like an easy glove."

The original of this is in Maxim 494:—

"Dans les premières passions les femmes aiment l'amant; et dans les autres elles aiment l'amour."

The second appropriation follows close upon the first:—

"Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted;
Yet there are some, they say, who have had none;
But those who have ne'er end with only one."

So in Maxim 73, of the same author:—

"On peut trouver des femmes qui n'ont jamais eu de galanterie; mais il est rare d'en trouver qui n'en aient jamais eu qu'une."

Another substantial plagiarism in "Don Juan" occurs in Canto III.:—

"A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw;
A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton's,
Who dying on the coast of Ithica,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a pittance:
These to secure in this strong blowing weather,
He caged in one large hamper all together."

This is shown to have been taken from the following passage in one of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's "Letters," where she speaks of the Coalition Ministry of 1757 :—

"Your account of the changes in ministerial affairs does not surprise me; but nothing could be more astonishing than their all coming in together. It puts me in mind of a friend of mine who had a large family of favourite animals; and, not knowing how to convey them to his country-house in separate equipages, he ordered a Dutch mastiff, a cat and her kittens, a monkey and a parrot, all to be packed up together in one large hamper, and sent by a waggon. One may easily guess how this set of company made their journey; and I have never been able to think of the present compound ministry without the idea of barking, scratching, and screaming."

Lord Byron draws from every available source. Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho" furnishes an instance, where she describes the appearance of Venice :—

"Its terraces crowded with airy yet majestic fabrics, touched as they now were with the splendour of the setting sun, appeared as if they had been called up from the ocean by the wand of an enchanter."

A copy of the simile at the close will be found in the opening stanzas of the fourth Canto of "Childe Harold :"—

"I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand;
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand."

Lastly, we have the passage in the "Doge of Venice:"—

> "As yet 'tis but a chaos
> Of darkly-brooding thoughts; my fancy is
> In her first work, more nearly to the light
> Holding the sleeping images of things,
> For the selection of the pausing judgment."

Which Byron has copied from Dryden's Dedication to the "Rival Ladies," where he says of the progress of the work:—

"When it was only a confused mass of thoughts, tumbling over one another in the dark; when the fancy was yet in its first work, moving the sleeping images of things towards the light, there to be distinguished, and there either to be chosen or rejected by the judgment."

Shelley, who had so much to lend, did not disdain to borrow. Among the few things of this kind to be met with in his poems are these lines in his little piece on "Mutability."

> "Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
> Nought may endure but mutability."

The first is taken from these in Dryden:—

> "Man is but man, inconstant still and various;
> There's no To-morrow in him like To-day;"

or, as Cowper expresses it:—

"The world upon which we close our eyes at night, is never the same with that on which we open them in the morning."

The second is also a borrowed line, and may be traced, through several poets, from Ovid

downwards. The first English writer who appears to have adopted the thought is the Earl of Surrey, in this passage:—

"Short is th' uncertain reign of pomp and mortal pride:
New turns and changes every day
Are of inconstant chance the constant arts."

Cowley has it in the lines:—

"The world 's a scene of changes, and to be
Constant in Nature were inconstancy."

And Rochester in the couplet:—

"Since 'tis Nature's law to change,
Constancy alone is strange."

The sentiment also occurs in the French poets: Malherbe has pithily expressed it in one of his "Odes:"—

"Et rien, afin que tout dure,
Ne dure éternellement."

And J.-B. Rousseau beautifully in the lines:—

"Le Temps, cette image mobile
De l'immobile Eternité."

Casimir, the Polish poet, has the same thought in the couplet:—

"Quod tibi largâ dedit Hora dextrâ
Hora furaci rapiet sinistrâ."

It occurs in the lines:—

"To give the sex their due,
They scarcely are to their own wishes true;
They love, they hate, and yet they know not why:
Constant in nothing but inconstancy."

And in this passage in Alison's "History of Europe from Fall of Napoleon:"—

"Fickle in everything else, the French have been faithful in one thing only—their love of change."

This antithesis could not escape the notice of La Rochefoucauld, who, in his 175th maxim, thus applies it to Love:—

"La constance en amour est une inconstance perpétuelle, qui fait que notre cœur s'attache successivement à toutes les qualités de la personne que nous aimons. Cette constance n'est qu'une inconstance arrêtée et renfermée dans un même sujet."

Again, in "Hellas" Shelley has a couplet which is borrowed from Lord Bacon:—

"Kings are like stars, they rise and set; they have
The worship of the world, but no repose."

Bacon's words are:—

"Princes are like the heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times, and which have much veneration but no rest."—*Essay of Empire.*

Among our poetical plagiarists Thomas Campbell deserves a prominent place. His fine things, like those of Pope and Gray, have become familiar to us as "household words;" and, all the while, we seem unaware of the sources from which they are derived.

"O'er the fair face so close a veil is thrown,
That every borrow'd grace becomes his own."

The first sample I have to notice occurs at the opening of the "Pleasures of Hope:"—

"Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye,
Whose sun-bright summit mingles with the sky?
'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountain in its azure hue."

Garth has the same idea in the following couplet:—

"At distance prospects please us, but when near
We find but desert rocks and fleeting air."

And there is a passage in Collins's "Ode to the Passions," which ascribes to sound the effect attributed by Campbell to sight:—

"Pale Melancholy sat apart,
And from her wild sequester'd seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Pour'd thro' the mellow horn her pensive soul."

The passage in Campbell, however, seems to have been appropriated from these lines in Otway's "Venice Preserved:"—

"A goodly prospect, tempting to the view;
The height delights us, and the mountain-top
Looks beautiful because 'tis nigh to heaven."

Another of Campbell's borrowings is this couplet in the "Pleasures of Hope:"—

"When front to front the banner'd hosts combine,
Halt ere they close, and form the dreadful line;"

which is taken from Pope's "Battle of Frogs and Mice:"—

"When front to front the marching armies shine,
Halt ere they meet, and form the lengthening line."

In the same poem we have the verse :—

" The strings of Nature crack'd with agony ; "

adopted from this passage in Shakspeare's " King Lear : "—

" His grief grew puisant, and the strings of life
Began to crack."

The readers of Hazlitt will remember Campbell's noted plagiarism from Blair, the author of the " Grave." Blair has it :—

" Its visits,
" Like those of angels, short and far between."

And Campbell, in the " Pleasures of Hope," echoes without acknowledgment :—

" Like angels' visits, few and far between."

It is now ascertained, however, that we are indebted for this beautiful image, neither to Campbell nor to Blair, but to Norris of Bemerton, who thus expresses it in one of his poems :—

" But those who soonest take their flight,
Are the most exquisite and strong ;
Like angels' visits, short and bright,
Mortality 's too weak to bear them long."

It occurs also in a poem to the memory of his niece :—

" No wonder such a noble mind
Her way to heaven so soon should find :
Angels, as 'tis but seldom they appear,
So neither do they make long stay ;
They do but visit and away."

To these instances in Campbell may be added a forceful line in the "Pleasures of Hope," which has been adopted from one of Coleridge's sonnets. Campbell has it:—

"And Freedom shriek'd as Kosciusko fell."

The passage in Coleridge stands thus:—

"O what a loud and fearful shriek was there!
* * * * * *
Ah me! they view'd beneath an hireling's sword
Fallen Koskiusco."

The next example is the famous line in "Lochiel's Warning:"—

"And coming events cast their shadows before;"

the origin of which will be found in Leibnitz's remark:—

"Le présent est gros de l'avenir."

And in the comments made thereon by Isaac D'Israeli: the latter, referring to Leibnitz's words, says:—

"The multitude live only among the shadows of things in the appearances of the present."

And in another passage he couples the word "shadow" with the word "precursor," in such a manner as to express, in the clearest language, the whole thought attributed to Campbell. The ordinary relation of a shadow to the substance by which it is formed, is that of a follower:—

"Envy will merit as its shade *pursue;*
But, like the shadow, proves the substance true:"

whereas, in the language of D'Israeli, the shadow is made to *precede* the substance. These are his words :—

"This volume of Reynolds seems to have been the *shadow* and *precursor* of one of the most substantial of literary monsters, the 'Histriomastix, or Player's Scourge of Prynne, in 1633.'"

An instance of the same thought occurs in Chapman's Tragedy of "Bussy d'Ambois his Revenge:"—

"These two shadows of the Guise and Cardinal,
Fore-running thus their bodies, may approve
That all things to be done, as here we live,
Are done before all time in th' other life."

And Shelley has it in one of his prose pieces :—

"Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present."

The next example is the line in "Gertrude of Wyoming:"—

"But stock-doves plaining thro' its gloom profound;"

which is taken from Thomson's "Castle of Indolence:"—

"Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep."

An instance in the same poem is where Campbell describes the white child led to the house of Albert, by an Indian of swarthy lineament, as

"Led by his dusky guide, like morning brought by night."

Hazlitt says this is an admirable simile, and Jeffrey deems it somewhat fantastical; but whether admirable or fantastical, or neither, certain it is that, so far as Campbell is concerned, it is not original. Two hundred years ago, Cowley, in his "Hymn to Light," compared darkness to an old negro, and light, its offspring, to a fair child. He is addressing the Light:—

> "First-born of Chaos! who so fair didst come
> From the old negro's darksome womb;
> Which, when it saw the lovely child,
> The melancholy mass put on kind looks and smiled."

Yalden, too, has borrowed this from Cowley:—

> "Parent of day, whose beauteous beams of light
> Spring from the darksome womb of night,
> And midst their native horrors show,
> Like gems adorning of the negro's brow."

To these instances may be added the line in the "Soldier's Dream:"—

> "And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky;"

which has been adopted from Lee's "Theodosius:"—

> "The stars, Heaven's sentry, wink and seem to die."

R. Montgomery has the same image in his "Omnipresence of the Deity:"—

> "Ye quenchless stars, so eloquently bright,
> Untroubled sentries of the shadowy night."

And it occurs in this passage in De La Mennais :—

"All creatures praise God; the orb of day and the watch-lights of the night hymn unto him their mysterious language."

Tennyson has some striking passages which must be reckoned among unacknowledged appropriations. One of these is founded upon some remarkable lines in Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes," where that fine poet, with a delicacy and picturesqueness peculiarly his own, describes Madeline in the act of unrobing: —

"Anon her heart revives; her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels, one by one,
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees,
Half-hidden like a mermaid in sea-weed."

The whole of this inimitable sketch has been adopted by Tennyson in his "Legend of Gondiva:"—

"Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim earl's gift; but ever at a breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipp'd in cloud; anon she shook her head
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee."

Tennyson has also an appropriated passage in the "Gardener's Daughter:"—

"We coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dove-cot, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there."

This is taken from Dante's "Inferno:"—

"Quali colombe dal desio chiamate,
Con l' ali aperte a ferme al dolce nido
Vengon per aere da voler portate."

From the same source Tennyson has transferred to his "Locksley Hall" another beautiful thought:"—

"This is the truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

Dante's words are:—

"Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

Tennyson has also a few borrowed thoughts from our elder poets. Shakspeare, in "Hamlet," says:—

"Lay her i' the earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring."

And Tennyson, in "In Memoriam,"—

"'Tis well; 'tis something we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid;
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land."

The original thought, however, has been traced to Persius, who says in his first Satire:—

"Nunc non e manibus illis,
Nunc non e tumulo fortunatâque favillâ
Nascentur violæ."

Again, we have the lines in the "Miller's Daughter:"—

> "And dews that would have fallen in tears
> I kiss'd away before they fell;"

which have been taken from "Paradise Lost:"—

> "Two other precious drops that ready stood,
> Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
> Kiss'd."

To these may be added the pretty line in the "Two Voices:"—

> "You scarce could see the grass for flowers;"

for which Tennyson is indebted to the dramatist George Peele:—

> "Ye may no see, for peeping flowers, the grasse."

I shall conclude these notices with some samples from Robert Montgomery, for the discovery of which we are indebted to Macaulay. I give them in that writer's words:—

"We never fell in with any plunderer who so little understood how to turn his booty to good account as Mr. Montgomery. Lord Byron, in a passage which everybody knows by heart, has said, addressing the sea,—

> 'Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow.'

Mr. Robert Montgomery very coolly appropriates the image, and reproduces the stolen goods in the following form:—

> 'And thou vast ocean, on whose awful face
> Time's iron feet can print no ruin-trace.'

A few more lines bring us to another instance of unprofitable

theft. Sir Walter Scott has these lines in the 'Lord of the Isles:'—

> 'The dew that on the violet lies
> Mocks the dark lustre of thine eyes.'

Now for Mr. Montgomery:—

> 'And the bright dew-bead on the bramble lies,
> Like liquid rapture upon beauty's eyes.' "

To these examples Macaulay adds the couplet in the "Omnipresence of the Deity," which I have already quoted in speaking of the poet Campbell.

From the preceding remarks the reader will perceive that some of the best thoughts in our modern poets, and some of the most admired passages in their works, turn out, after all, to be little better than plagiarisms. It is in our prose writings, however, that the system is practised with the least scrupulosity. In some instances recourse is had to a slight change in the language, in order to disguise the theft; but, in general, all attempts at palliation are repudiated, and the writer proceeds, with the coolest effrontery, to appropriate not only the thoughts but the very words of the original. To furnish examples of all the "patchwork and plagiarism" which are resorted to in this way, for the manufacture of books, would be to transcribe into these pages a large proportion of the prose compositions of our time. One instance, however, it may be proper

to quote, and that I shall take from Mrs. Foster's "Handbook of European Literature."

The title of this work indicates its character and scope. It is a compilation which any writer might have undertaken, and in the execution of which many a writer would have displayed both learning and research. From the catalogues and lists of publications of the several countries whose literature is noticed, Mrs. Foster copies the names of authors and of their works. So far no one is imposed upon, and no one has a right to complain. But the case is altered when we come to deal with the comments with which the authors' names are introduced. Such comments, when their origin is not indicated, are supposed to be the fruit of the writer's knowledge and experience; and to her we naturally assign any merit, for soundness or sagacity, to which they may be entitled. Now, I find that Mrs. Foster's notices, with very few exceptions, have been appropriated without acknowledgment from other writers. Some are copied from encyclopædias, some from magazines, some from reviews. Some are purloined from Sismondi; some from Roscoe; others from Macaulay; others again from Sir Bulwer Lytton. In one place a whole page of comments is adopted from one work; in another, the comments are made up of sentences cut out of different writers, and strung together with peculiar ingenuity. The book, in short, cannot

be more appropriately described than in the words of Hazlitt:—"It is all patchwork and plagiarism, the beggarly copiousness of borrowed wealth;" and this is carried to such an extent, that there is scarcely an important remark in its 452 pages that is not traceable to the writer from whom it has been taken.

At pages 10, 11, there is a notice of Petrarch, occupying twenty-two lines, which is given as part of Mrs. Foster's text, without inverted commas, or any other marks to show that the writer intended it as a quotation; yet the whole passage is copied word for word from Macaulay's "Essay on Machiavelli." Farther on, at pages 26, 27, Mrs. Foster has a paragraph of thirty lines on the subject of Machiavelli and his writings, which she has very dexterously appropriated from the same writer. The passage is not to be found anywhere in Macaulay in a consecutive form; but there is not a sentence in it that has not been picked out from some part of the Essay already referred to. Again, at pages 293 and 294, we have some twenty-five lines of comments on our British writers, which have been extracted verbatim from pages 61, 62, and 64, of Sir Bulwer Lytton's "England and the English."

What can be said in defence of this wholesale system of literary plunder? That the author preferred giving to the public the matured judg-

ments of our great critical authorities, rather than her own crude and ill-expressed opinions? But then, why did she not acknowledge the sources from which she drew the observations? She has done so in a few instances, and this proves that she intended the unacknowledged passages to be received as the emanations of her personal experience and sagacity. For the rest, nothing can be more imperfect than this compilation. Some of the best writers are not mentioned even by name; and in a great number of instances the names are incorrectly given, or the authors are inaccurately described. Of those that are named, the best works are frequently omitted; while, as regards the compiler's remarks, what is good is borrowed, and what is not borrowed is commonplace.

We hear a great deal in this age of what are called "Idées Napoléoniennes," the wisdom of Napoleon, and so forth. Some of this is invented by the writers, and ascribed to Napoleon; some of it is no wisdom at all; and some is what I call second-hand wisdom, an old familiar face with a new dress. Of this last sort is the famous saying:—

"From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step."

For this remark Napoleon has obtained considerable notice. The truth, however, seems to be, that he adopted it from Tom Paine; Tom

Paine from Hugh Blair, and Hugh Blair from Longinus. Napoleon's words, as quoted by the Abbé De Pradt, are :—

"Du sublime au ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas."

The passage in Tom Paine, whose writings were translated into French as early as 1791, stands thus :—

"The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related, that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again."

Blair has a remark akin to this :—

"It is indeed extremely difficult to hit the precise point where true wit ends and buffoonery begins."

But the passage in Blair from which Tom Paine adopted his notion of the sublime and the ridiculous, is that in which Blair, commenting on Lucan's style, remarks :—

"It frequently happens that where the second line is sublime, the third, in which he meant to rise still higher, is perfectly bombast."

Lastly, this saying is borrowed by Blair from his brother rhetorician, Longinus, who, in his "Treatise on the Sublime," has the following sentence at the beginning of Section III. :—

"Τεθόλωται γὰρ τῇ φράσει, καὶ τεθορύβηται ταῖς φαντασίαις μᾶλλον ἢ δεδείνοται, κᾆν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν πρὸς αὐγὰς ἀνασκοπῇς ἐκ τοῦ φοβεροῦ κατ' ὀλίγον ὑπονοστεῖ πρὸς τὸ εὐκαταφρόνητον."

This is referred to by Warton in his comments on Pope's translation of the "Thebais" of Statius; and Dr. Croly, apparently unacquainted with the passages in Paine and Blair, describes it in his edition of Pope as the anticipation of Napoleon's celebrated remark. It will be seen that the original saying has undergone a slight modification, Longinus making the transition a gradual one, "κατ' ὀλίγον," while Blair, Paine, and Napoleon make it "but a step." Yet, notwithstanding this disguise, the marks of its paternity are sufficiently traceable.

So much for this celebrated apothegm. And after all there is very little wit or wisdom in it that is not expressed or suggested by Seneca's remark:—

"Nullum ingenium magnum sine mixtura dementiæ;"

or, as Shakspeare adopts it in "Measure for Measure:"—

"Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense;"

or Dryden, more closely still, in the well-known line:—

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied;"

or Bayle, where he says:—

"Il n'y a point de grand esprit dans le caractère duquel il n'entre un peu de folie."

The sentiment also occurs in Horace's line:—

"Aut insanit homo, aut versus facit;"

or, as old Passerat has it in this quatrain on Thulene, the buffoon :—

" Sire, Thulène est mort, j'ai vu sa sépulture,
Mais il est presque en vous de le ressuciter,
Faites de son état un poète héritier ;
Le poète et le fou sont de même nature."

Shakspeare, in "As You like It," has a kindred thought :—

" All's brave that youth mounts and folly guides ;"

which Dryden echoes in his " Œdipus :"—

" But Fortune will have nothing done that's great
But by young handsome fools.
* * * * * *
Fool is the stuff of which Heaven makes a hero."

And Rochester in the lines :—

" The very top
And dignity of folly we attain,
By studious search and labour of the brain :
* * * * * *
An eminent fool must be a man of parts."

The same thought is reproduced in La Rochefoucauld's " Maxims :"—

" La plus subtile folie se fait de la plus subtile sagesse."

" Plus on aime une maîtresse, plus on est près de la haïr."

In Rousseau's remark :—

" Tout état qui brille est sur son déclin."

In Beaumarchais' exclamation :—

" Que les gens d'esprit sont bêtes !"

In the old French proverb :—

"Les extrêmes se touchent."

In the English adage :—

"The darkest hour is nearest the dawn."

And in the following passages in our poets :—

"Evils that take leave,
On their departure most of all show evil."
Shakspeare.

"Dark with excessive light thy skirts appear."
Milton.

"Wit, like tierce claret, when 't begins to pall,
Neglected lies, and 's of no use at all;
But in its full perfection of decay
Turns vinegar, and comes again in play."
Rochester.

"Pilgrim, trudge on: what makes thy soul complain
Crowns thy complaint; the way to rest is pain;
The road to resolution lies by doubt;
The next way home 's the farthest way about."
Quarles.

"Such huge extremes inhabit thy great mind,
Godlike, unmoved—and yet, like woman, kind."
Waller.

"The water'd eyven from whence the teares do fall,
Do feel some force or elce they would be dry;
The wasted flesh of colour ded can try,
And sometime tell what sweetness is in gall."
Wyatt.

"So every sweet with soure is temper'd still."
Spenser.

"Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy."
Shakspeare.

"A choking gall and a preserving sweet."
Shakspeare.

"I languish with these bitter sweet extremes."
Quarles.

"Secrets of marriage still are sacred held;
Their sweet and bitter by the wise conceal'd."
Dryden.

"Discord oft in music makes the sweeter lay."
Spenser.

"For discords make the sweetest airs,
And curses are a kind of prayers."
Butler.

"The glorious lamp of Heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting."
Herrick.

"For men as resolute appear
With too much as too little fear."
Butler.

"Th' extremes of glory and of shame,
Like east and west become the same;
No Indian prince has to his palace
More followers, than a thief to the gallows."
Butler.

"For as extremes are short of ill or good,
And tides at highest mark regorge the flood:
So fate, that could no more improve their joy,
Took a malicious pleasure to destroy."
Dryden.

"There's but the twinkling of a star
Between a man of peace and war;
A thief and justice, fool and knave;
A huffing officer and a slave,
A crafty lawyer and pickpocket,
A great philosopher and blockhead,
A formal preacher and a player,
A learned physician and manslayer;
As wind in th' hypocondries pent
Is but a blast, if downward sent;
But if it upwards chance to fly,
Becomes new light and prophecy."

Butler.

"Extremes in Nature equal ends produce,
And oft so mix, the difference is too nice,
Where ends the virtue or begins the vice."

Pope.

"Still where rosy pleasure leads,
See a kindred grief pursue;
Behind the steps that misery treads
Approaching comfort view:
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe,
And, blended, form with artful strife
The strength and harmony of life."

Gray.

"Loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is, when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most."

Thomson.

"The heaviest raining is the briefest shower."

Beddoes.

The truth and beauty of this sentiment are further illustrated by Martial's Epigram:—

"Difficilis, facilis, jucundus, acerbus es idem;
Nec tecum possum vivere, nec sine te."

By Junius's remark:—

"Your majesty may learn hereafter how nearly the slave and the tyrant are allied."

And by the following passage in Robespierre's Report to the Convention, on the 23rd December, 1793:—

"Tyrants have wished to throw us back into servitude by moderation; sometimes they aim at the same object by throwing us into the opposite extreme. These two extremes terminate in the same point. The fanatic covered with his relics, and the fanatic who preaches atheism, are closely allied."

Richter, in "Levana," has a couple of places to the same purpose:—

"Stiff citizen manners occupy only the middle place; the extremities approach one another so closely, that in the highest ranks the freedom of the savage is renewed."

"Boys, when approaching near to manhood, shew the least affection, the most love of teasing, the greatest destructiveness, the most selfishness and cold-heartedness; just as the coldness of the night increases twofold shortly before the rising of the sun."

A very striking application of this image occurs in an Essay on the "Uses of Adversity," by Herman Hooker, an American writer:—

"A pious lady who had lost her husband, was for a time inconsolable. She could not think, scarcely could she speak of anything but him. Nothing seemed to take her attention but the three promising children he had left her, singing to her his presence, his look, his love. But soon these were all taken ill, and died within a few days of each other; and now

the childless mother was calmed even by the greatness of the stroke. As the lead that goes quickly down to the ocean's depth ruffles its surface less than lighter things, so the blow which was strongest did not so much disturb her calm of mind, but drove her to its proper trust."

We close our examples here. It is of the sentiment which we have thus endeavoured to illustrate, that Coleridge says:—

"Extremes meet;—a proverb, by the by, to collect and explain all the instances and exemplifications of which, would constitute and exhaust all philosophy."—*The Friend.*

Our next sample of an "Idée Napoléonienne" is the famous exclamation, "La Garde meurt et ne se rend pas!" said to have been uttered at Waterloo. As at Pavia Francis the First found consolation for the loss of the battle in the remark, "tout est perdu hormis l'honneur;" so, at Waterloo, when "sauve qui peut" became the order of the day, it was no small cause of exultation to the vanquished to be able to boast that their famous "Garde" preferred death to dishonour. The French plume themselves on this saying, not only as an indignant protest against the loss of the battle, but as containing one of those happy transpositions, which invest a thought with peculiar significance and force. When La Fontaine makes the reed say:—

"Je plie et ne romps pas,"

the ideas follow each other in their natural order; and we conceive at once, that if there

were any breaking, it would follow the bending as a consequence. But in "La Garde meurt et ne se rend pas," there is a striking energy in placing death as the foremost object in the contemplation of the soldier.

This saying has been ascribed to almost every man that played a conspicuous part on the side of the French at Waterloo, but more commonly to General Cambronne. I believe, however, that it can be traced to a much higher source, and that it is at best but a feeble version of the memorable words uttered by one of Virgil's heroes:—

"Moriamur, et in media arma ruamus."

Another celebrated maxim, the pretended emanation of modern wisdom, is attributed to Prince Talleyrand, namely:—

"La parole n'a été donnée à l'homme que pour déguiser sa pensée."

The saying is certainly quite in keeping with the genius of that accomplished master in the art of dissimulation; and if he was not the first to propound it, he was the foremost to practise its Machiavelism. Political tergiversation was the grand rule of his life, and every step in his extraordinary career was designed to illustrate a system of deceit, in which nothing was undisguised but the intention to disguise.

The truth, however, seems to be, that this saying, like most good things of its kind, has been repeated by so many eminent writers, that it is impossible to trace it to any one in particular, in the precise form in which it is now popularly received. I shall quote, in succession, all those who have expressed it in words of the same, or a nearly similar, import, and leave the reader to judge for himself.

Jeremy Taylor had the sentiment clearly in view in the following sentence:—

"There is in mankind an universal contract implied in all their intercourses; and words being instituted to declare the mind, and for no other end, he that hears me speak hath a right in justice to be done him, that as far as I can, what I speak be true; for else he by words does not know your mind, and then as good and better not speak at all."

Then comes David Lloyd, who, in his "State Worthies," thus remarks of Sir Roger Ascham:—

"None is more able for, yet none is more averse to, that circumlocution and contrivance, wherewith some men shadow their main drift and purpose. Speech was made to open man to man and not to hide him; to promote commerce and not betray it."

Dr. South, Lloyd's contemporary, but who survived him more than twenty years, expresses the sentiment in nearly the same words:—

"In short, this seems to be the true inward judgment of all our politick sages, that speech was given to the ordinary sort of men whereby to communicate their mind, but to wise men whereby to conceal it."

The next writer in whom it occurs is Butler, the author of "Hudibras." In one of his prose essays on the "Modern Politician," he says:—

"He [the modern politician] believes a man's words and his meanings should never agree together; for he that says what he thinks lays himself open to be expounded by the most ignorant; and he who does not make his words rather serve to conceal than discover the sense of his heart, deserves to have it pulled out like a traitor's, and shown publicly to the rabble."

Young has the thought in this couplet on the duplicity of courts:—

"When Nature's end of language is declined,
And men talk only to conceal their mind."

From Young it passed to Voltaire, who, in the dialogue entitled "Le Chapon et la Poularde," makes the former say of the treachery of men:—

"Ils n'emploient les paroles que pour déguiser leurs pensées."

Goldsmith, about the same time, in his paper in the "Bee," produces it in the well-known words:—

"Men who know the world hold that the true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them."

Then we have Talleyrand, who is reported to have said,—

"La parole n'a été donnée à l'homme que pour déguiser sa pensée."

world is now ancient, *ordine retrogrado*, by a computation backward from our own times."

Pascal, in one of his "Pensées," has borrowed this from Bacon, enlarging upon it after his own fashion; and Bentham has done little more than copy Pascal. The latter remarks:—

"Toute la suite des hommes, pendant le cours de tant de siècles, doit être considérée comme un même homme qui subsiste toujours et qui apprend continuellement: d'où l'on voit avec combien d'injustice nous respectons l'antiquité dans ses philosophes; car comme la vieillesse est l'âge le plus distant de l'enfance, qui ne voit que la vieillesse de cet homme universel ne doit pas être cherchée dans les temps proches de sa naissance, mais dans ceux qui en sont le plus éloignés? Ceux que nous appelons anciens étaient véritablement nouveaux en toutes choses, et formaient l'enfance des hommes, proprement; et comme nous avons joint à leurs connaissances l'expérience des siècles qui les ont suivis, c'est en nous que l'on peut trouver cette antiquité que nous révérons dans les autres."

Dugald Stewart, however, in his dissertation prefixed to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," assigns a higher origin to this thought than even Lord Bacon, and refers it to the following passage in the "Opus Majus" of Roger Bacon:—

"Quanto juniores, tanto perspicaciores, quia juniores, posteriores successione temporum, ingrediuntur labores priorum."

Although Roger Bacon's "Opus Majus" was not published till the eighteenth century, there is every reason to suppose that Lord Bacon had seen the manuscript. The fame of a man bearing

The latest writer who employs this remark is, I believe, Lord Holland. In his "Life of Lope de Vega," he says of certain Spanish writers, promoters of the *cultismo* style:—

"These authors do not avail themselves of the invention of letters for the purpose of conveying, but of concealing their ideas."

From these passages it will be seen that the germ of the thought is to be found in Jeremy Taylor; that Lloyd and South have improved upon his mode of expressing it; that Butler, Young, and Goldsmith have repeated it after them; that Voltaire has translated it into French; that Talleyrand has echoed Voltaire's words; and that it has now become so familiar an expression that any one may employ it, as Lord Holland has done, without being at the trouble of citing his authority.

There is a notion in Bentham's "Book of Fallacies" which is often quoted for its depth and acuteness. It is where he ridicules the expression "the wisdom of our ancestors," and shows that, as wisdom increases with years, so we who live in the present age are possessed of a greater degree of it than those who lived in the early ages of the world. The origin of this thought is assigned to Lord Bacon, who, in his "Advancement of Learning," says:—

"And indeed, to speak truly, 'Antiquitas sæculi juventus mundi;' certainly our times are the ancient times, when the

his patronymic would naturally lead him to make inquiries respecting his writings: and the presumption that he did so is confirmed by more than one passage in his lordship's works, which present a striking similarity, both in thought and expression, to the remarks of his great namesake.

Another, and indeed far from improbable, conjecture is, that the source of this remarkable thought is to be found in the following verse in the "Book of Esdras:"—

"Sæculum perdidit juventutem suam, et tempora appropinquant senescere."

There is a thought in Pascal to which La Rochefoucauld furnishes a parallel. Pascal says:—

"Il n'y a point d'homme plus différent d'un autre que de soi-même, dans les divers temps."

La Rochefoucauld has it:—

"On est quelques fois aussi différent de soi-même que des autres."

Which is the borrower, it is not easy to determine; but one or the other has adopted it from this of Horace:—

"Nihil fuit unquam
Sic dispar sibi."

Another of La Rochefoucauld's aphorisms:—

"L'hypocrisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu,"

has been diluted in the following fashion by Sir Walter Scott :—

"Hypocrisy cannot exist unless religion be to a certain extent held in esteem, because no one would be at the trouble to assume a mask which was not respectable; and, so far, compliance with the external forms of religion is a tribute paid to the doctrines which it teaches."—*Life of Napoleon.*

And Trench has it in this passage :—

"When we have learnt the pedigree of the word, the man and the age which gave it birth rise up before us, glorying in their shame, and no longer caring to pay to virtue even that outward hypocritical homage which vice not seldom yields."—*On the Study of Words.*

Gibbon has a striking observation on the nature of history, which he describes as,

"Little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind."

This seems to have been adopted from Voltaire, who says in one of his prose works : —

"En effet, l'histoire n'est que le tableau des crimes et des malheurs."

Even Junius is not free from the imputation of borrowing. In his seventh "Letter," addressed to Sir W. Draper, he has the remark :—

"It is the middle compound character which alone is vulnerable; the man who, without firmness enough to avoid a dishonourable action, has feeling enough to be ashamed of it."

This is taken from Bevil Higgons' "Short View of English History:"—

"So weak and fallible is that admired maxim: 'factum valet quod fieri non debuit,' an excuse first invented to palliate the unfledged villany of some men who are ashamed to be knaves, yet have not the courage to be honest."

Another borrowed thought in Junius occurs in the well-known passage where he employs that curious simile of the *caput mortuum* of vitriol:—

"He was forced to go through every division, resolution, composition, and refinement of political chemistry, before he happily arrived at the *caput mortuum* of vitriol in your grace. Flat and insipid in your retired state; but brought into action, you become vitriol again. Such are the extremes of alternate indolence or fury which have governed your whole administration."

The simile here has evidently been taken from these lines in Rochester:—

"Wit, like tierce claret, when 't begins to pall,
Neglected lies and 's of no use at all;
But in its full perfection of decay
Turns vinegar, and comes again in play."

Then we have the passage in another of the "Letters:"—

"In the shipwreck of the state, trifles float and are preserved; while everything solid and valuable sinks to the bottom and is lost for ever."

Which is but a prose version of the thought expressed by Dryden's couplet:—

"Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls must dive below."

Chenevix, in his "Essay on National Character," remarks:—

"This single day is sufficient to prove that the trident of Neptune is the true sceptre of the universe."

Here is a saying well worthy of an Englishman; the merit of which, however, belongs to the French poet Lemierre, who says in his poem on "Commerce:"—

"Le trident de Neptune est le sceptre du monde."

One of the most beautiful similes in any language occurs in a passage in Hallam's "Literature of Europe." The writer is speaking of Pascal, and remarks:—

"His melancholy genius plays in wild and rapid flashes, like lightning round the scathed oak, about the fallen greatness of man."

It occurred to me, on reading this, that it must have emanated from some imagination of a more poetic cast than Hallam's; and, some time after, I was not surprised to meet with it in this passage in Moore's "Lalla Rookh:"—

"In every glance there broke without control
The flashes of a bright but troubled soul;
Where sensibility still wildly play'd,
Like lightning round the ruins it had made."

Macaulay, in his "Essay on Sir James Mackintosh," first published in 1835, presents us with

another striking similitude. He is speaking of the progress of the national mind, and compares its ebb and flow to those of the sea :—

"We have often thought that the motion of the public mind resembles that of the sea, when the tide is rising. Each successive wave rushes forward, breaks, and rolls back, but the great flood is steadily coming in. A person who looked on the waters only for a moment might fancy that they were retiring. A person who looked on them only for five minutes might fancy that they were rushing capriciously to and fro. But when he keeps his eye on them for a quarter of an hour, and sees one sea-mark disappear after another, it is impossible for him to doubt of the general direction in which the ocean is moved. Just such has been the course of events in England."

This beautiful simile may have been suggested by Longinus, who compares Homer, writing the "Iliad," to the ocean at highwater-mark, and Homer, writing the "Odyssey," to the ocean receding within its ordinary limits, yet leaving behind it the vestiges of its former imposing grandeur. It will be seen, however, on a closer examination, that there is nothing in common between the two writers but the object which serves as the means of comparison. But if Macaulay has not borrowed from Longinus, Carlyle has borrowed from Macaulay; for, in one of his Lectures delivered in 1840, I find Macaulay's similitude reproduced in nearly the same words, with this difference, that, while Macaulay employs it to illustrate the progress of the national mind, Carlyle uses it to describe

what he believes to be the retrogression or disappearance of Popery :—

"Popery cannot come back any more than Paganism can—which also still lingers in some countries. But indeed it is with these things as with the ebbing of the sea: you look at the waves oscillating hither, thither, on the beach; for minutes you cannot tell how it is going. Look in half an hour where it is: look in half a century where your Popehood is!"

La Rochefoucauld, with characteristic insight, says in his 326th Maxim :—

"Le ridicule déshonore plus que le déshonneur."

Rousseau, in his "Nouvelle Héloise," has the same remark :—

"A considérer ces propos selon nos idées, ils sont bien plus railleurs que mordans, et tombent moins sur le vice que sur le ridicule. Malheur à qui prête le flanc au ridicule; il ne déchire pas seulement les mœurs, la vertu; il marque jusqu'au vice même."

And Viscount D'Arlincourt, in "Trois Châteaux," has expressed it in these words :—

"Qu'on nomme quelqu'un homme infâme à Paris, cela frappe à peine: que l'on dise homme ridicule, on est tué du coup."

The same notion occurs in three of our English writers. Pope has it in one of his Letters :—

"I have learned that there are some who would rather be wicked than ridiculous; and therefore it may be safer to attack vices than follies."

Sir Bulwer Lytton, in "England and the English:"—

"The aristocratic influences have set up ridicule as the Criminal Code."

And Mrs. Gore in the following passage:—

"Be vile, be prodigal, be false, but do not make yourself ridiculous: a butt or a bore ranks with the worst of criminals."

D'Israeli, in the "Literary Character," has this striking observation:—

"The defects of great men are the consolation of the dunces;"

which Lord Byron quotes as a sample of D'Israeli's incomparable wisdom. It turns out, however, that the latter was indebted for the remark, such as it is, to Pope, who says in one of his letters to Swift:—

"A few loose things sometimes fall from men of wit, by which censorious fools judge as ill of them as they possibly can, for their own comfort."

Goldsmith, in the "Citizen of the World," has the same thought:—

"The folly of others is ever most ridiculous to those who are themselves the most foolish."

And it occurs in Burke in this pithy form:—

"Wisdom is not the most severe corrector of Folly."—*Reflections on the French Revolution.*

In the same work Burke has this remark:—

"Men of letters, fond of distinguishing themselves, are rarely averse to innovation."

Which Sir Walter Scott has thus appropriated:—

"Those ambitious of distinction are usually friends to innovation."—*Life of Napoleon.*

There is another remarkable thought in Burke, which Alison, the historian, has turned to good account. Indeed, it occurs so often in his disquisitions, that he seems to have made it the staple of all wisdom, and the basis of every truth. Burke's words are:—

"You had that action and counteraction, which in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe."—*Reflections on the French Revolution.*

The following are some of the passages in which Alison has reproduced this beautiful sentiment, without condescending, in a single instance, to name the illustrious man from whom he has adopted it:—

"Playfair traced in the revolution of our globe that mysterious system of action and reaction which pervades alike the moral and the material world."—*History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon.*

"He has forgotten that action and reaction are the law of nature, not less in the moral than in the material world."—*Ibid.*

"In the political not less than the physical world, action and reaction are equal and opposite."—*Ibid.*

"Action and reaction seems to be the law not less of the moral than the material world."—*Ibid.*

"The old law of nature is still in operation: action and reaction rule mankind."—*Essay on the Year of Revolutions.*

"Action and reaction is the law, not less of the intellectual than the physical world."—*Essay on the Historical Romance.*

The foregoing are some examples, from our prose writers, of borrowed thoughts and similes. It must be confessed, however, that it is not always easy to distinguish between actual borrowings, and such as are only so in appearance; between the thoughts which a writer has appropriated, and those which, being founded in nature, have naturally presented themselves to his mind. A deep-sighted thinker, one accustomed to serious meditation, will discover for himself what a man of ordinary capacity has to adopt from others. The one is a producer, the other a reproducer; the one an inventor, the other a copyist; the memory of the latter is stored with borrowed wealth; that of the former with original ideas, which haunt it,

"Like echoes of an antenatal dream."

A fruitful source of unconscious imitation is the word "sweet." Although its ordinary station is among the commonplaces of poetical diction, there is no expression that adapts itself, with such versatility and ease, to similitudes and to figurative language in general. It

appears to be specially suited to delineations of natural scenery, music, and love; and instances might be quoted from every poet, ancient or modern, which bear so close a resemblance to each other as to pass for imitations; yet which, in reality, are but echoes of Nature's universal voice, awakened in the poet's responsive breast.

LITERARY IMPOSTURES.

"The age of Shams."

CARLYLE.

LITERARY IMPOSTURES.

Akin to the subject of "Plagiarism" is that of Literary Impostures, some of which indeed are plagiarisms upon a large scale. Among the most remarkable of these, within the last hundred years, are Chatterton's "Rowley Poems," Macpherson's "Poems of Ossian," the Marquis de Surville's "Poems of Madame de Surville," Henri Beyle's "Letters on Haydn," Count de Courchamps' "Memoirs of the Marquise de Créquy," and the "Memoirs of Cagliostro," by the same writer.

The controversy respecting the authenticity of the poems which Chatterton has given to the world as those of Thomas Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century, has ceased to have any interest for the literary inquirer. It is now generally admitted that those poems have nothing in them of the fifteenth century but the antiquated spelling, in which Chatterton's acquaintance with the literature of that period

enabled him to dress them up. The sentiments and even the imagery are, for the most part, of a modern cast; while the borrowed thoughts which they contain (borrowed from poets of a date posterior to that of their pretended origin) leave no room to doubt that the "marvellous boy" was himself the author of those singular productions. Thomas Rowley, as a poet, is now no better than a myth.

Macpherson's "Ossian" is in the same predicament. It is possible indeed that a bard, such as Ossian is represented to have been, lived in the third century, and wrote poetical rhapsodies of a somewhat similar character to those published by Macpherson; but the original compositions, of which his "Poems of Ossian" profess to be translations, are nowhere to be found. A few fragmentary ballads, preserved by oral tradition among the Scottish peasantry, are all that has come down to us; and upon these Macpherson has stereotyped his "Poems of Ossian;" but whether those fragments are the production of a poet of that name and age, or of some bard of more modern date, will ever remain among the mysteries of literature.

A noticeable circumstance in connexion with the "Poems of Ossian" is the influence which they exercised on the literary mind of France immediately before the breaking out of the great Revolution and during the first quarter of the

nineteenth century. I well remember, while at college in Paris from 1823 to 1827, the enthusiasm with which the students used to descant upon "Les Poésies d'Ossian." He is the only English poet some of them had ever read, even in a translation; while others, whose acquaintance with English literature was sufficiently extensive, asserted that we had no poet like him. Compared with Ossian, Shakspeare, they said, was a savage, and Milton a madman.

The partiality of the French for the "Poems of Ossian" is a singular fact in the history of taste. Napoleon is said to have made them his constant study and delight; and the knowledge of that circumstance may have contributed, in some degree, to direct public attention to them. But what shall we say of Madame de Staël, whose judgment and taste are not inferior to those of any writer of her time; yet who carries her faith in Ossian so far as to believe that he was the founder of our northern literature? She even institutes a comparison between him and Homer, which is not always favourable to the "Father of Epic Poetry."

The eighteenth century was fertile in literary frauds; and the partially successful attempts of Chatterton and Macpherson soon led to similar impositions in France. The most remarkable of these was the publication, in 1803, of the "Poësies de Marguerite-Eléonore-Clotilde de

Valon-Chalys, depuis Madame de Surville, poëte Français du XV^e^ Siècle." This publication went forth under the auspices of M. Charles Vanderbourg, as the inedited poems of Madame de Surville, recently brought to light; and the fraud, as in the case of Chatterton, was promoted by means of the spelling and phraseology peculiar to the fifteenth century. For a time, the public, including many writers of distinction, were in raptures at the discovery of this supposed literary treasure; but by degrees the imposition was seen through, and the publication denounced as a forgery. The real author was the Marquis Joseph-Etienne de Surville, who from having commenced his career as a literary impostor, ended it by robbing the "diligences," and was shot in the Velay in 1798. He was a man of remarkable talent, as shown even by these Surville poems, the authenticity of which he maintained to the last.

Another French imposition was the publication by Henri Beyle, in 1815, of "Lettres écrites de Vienne en Autriche, sur le célèbre Compositeur Haydn." Although these letters appeared under the pseudonym of Louis Alexandre César Bombet, they were accredited in the world of letters as the production of Beyle; and Lord Byron, in his correspondence, pays him a high compliment for the ability and taste displayed in the work. It turned out, however, that the "Letters" were but a translation from the Italian of a work by

Joseph Carpani, entitled "Le Haydine:" nor was it until the latter publicly complained of the appropriation and produced the original, that Beyle admitted his claim. He then urged, in explanation of his having concealed the existence of Carpani's work, that, if he had published the "Letters" as "translated from the Italian," no one would have read them. Beyle's translation, together with his own remarks on French and Italian Art, was published in English in 1817, under the title of "Haydn, Mozart, and Metastasio."

But of all the literary frauds with which we are acquainted, that which has been practised within the last few years by the Count de Courchamps, under the title of "Mémoires inédits de Cagliostro," is at once the most impudent and the most unjustifiable. The facts are as follows (see Querard's "Supercheries Littéraires," vol. i., *sub voce* Cagliostro):—

In 1813 and 1814, John Potocki, a Polish count, published two novels, under the respective titles of "Vie d'Avadoro," and "Dix Journées de la Vie d'Alphonse Van Worden." The number of copies was very limited, and although the novels possessed considerable interest, they were soon lost sight of by the reading public. About the year 1835, Count de Courchamps, already well known as the author (not editor, as he pretended) of the "Souvenirs de la Marquise de

Créquy, 1710 à 1800," announced his design of publishing the "inedited Memoirs of Cagliostro;" and the public mind was soon raised to a pitch of expectation commensurate with the interest which the autobiography of that "Quack of Quacks" was naturally calculated to create. It was not, however, till 1841 that the work commenced to make its appearance; and even then, as if M. de Courchamps wished to feel his way, he only furnished certain portions of it. These were published as "feuilletons" in the "Presse" newspaper, under the titles of "Val Funeste," and "Histoire de Don Benito d'Almusenar;" but no sooner did they make their appearance than they were denounced by the "National" newspaper as literary piracies; the "Val Funeste" as having been copied verbatim from Potocki's "Dix Journées de la Vie d'Alphonse Van Worden," and the "Histoire de Don Benito d'Almusenar," as transcribed from the same author's "Vie d'Avadoro." Count de Courchamps had evidently imagined that, owing to the limited number of copies that had been printed of Potocki's novels, the length of time that had elapsed since their appearance, and the comparative oblivion into which they had fallen, he might appropriate them with impunity, and give them to the world as original and inedited. Thanks, however, to the perseverance and honesty of purpose with which the "National" pursued the investigation,

De Courchamps was soon made to repent of his folly, while proof after proof was laid before the public, that his "Memoirs of Cagliostro" was one of the most unprincipled frauds in the history of literature.

The worst feature in this transaction remains to be told. When Count de Courchamps saw that the fraud was discovered, instead of admitting it, or explaining it, as best he might, he endeavoured to turn the tables, as it were, upon his opponents, and stoutly asserted that, if there was any theft, it was committed, not by him, but by the publisher of the novels in 1813 and 1814, who, he said, had *surreptitiously* got possession of his manuscripts. In order to give a colour of truth to this charge, M. de Courchamps affirmed that he had lent his manuscripts in 1810 to Count de Pac, a Polish magnate; and as the latter was no longer alive to contradict this assertion, the public were left to suppose that Pac had communicated the manuscripts to Potocki.

But even on this ground the "National" boldly encountered M. de Courchamps, showing that Potocki's knowledge of the work could not be accounted for by any communication through Pac in 1810, inasmuch as Potocki had already published it at St. Petersburg, as far back as 1804, under the title of "Manuscrit trouvé à Saragosse." A copy of the latter publication was produced in court during the trial occasioned by

these proceedings, and this fact, of which De Courchamps had evidently been unaware, completely established the charge of literary piracy.

Compared with this fraud of De Courchamps, all other similar feats sink into insignificance. Poor Chatterton robbed no one but himself, doffing a crown that might have gracefully adorned his own youthful brow, to place it upon the bald front of an imaginary monk. The same, to a great extent, may be said of Macpherson, whose reputation would have been enhanced by the admission that, instead of translating, he had actually written down, a poet of the third century.

So, too, as regards the Marquis de Surville, who transferred to a lady of the fifteenth century the credit and fame of a volume of poems, of which he was the real author.

Again, in the case of Henri Beyle, there is this extenuating circumstance, that the appropriation of Carpani's work was made under a fictitious name; and, as he says, "Un anonyme peut-il être plagiaire?"

Even the Count de Courchamps himself, in his "Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy," confined the imposition within harmless, if not permissible, bounds. He chose to pass for the "editor," rather than the author, of that work; and so far he was the only loser. Indeed, in this instance, it can hardly be said that there

was any deception, as the character of the work carries with it sufficient evidence of its being the production of M. de Courchamps. But in the case of the "Memoirs of Cagliostro," we have the wholesale piracy of another man's property, systematically prosecuted during a series of years; the open, the absolute appropriation of his mental productions, accomplished with unparalleled effrontery, and upheld throughout by every species of falsehood and deceit.

Fortunately for the cause of truth and the honour of literature, the exposure was commensurate with the magnitude of the offence; and the castigation which Count de Courchamps has received, both in the public prints and in the courts of justice, will long be remembered as a warning to all future literary buccaneers.

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